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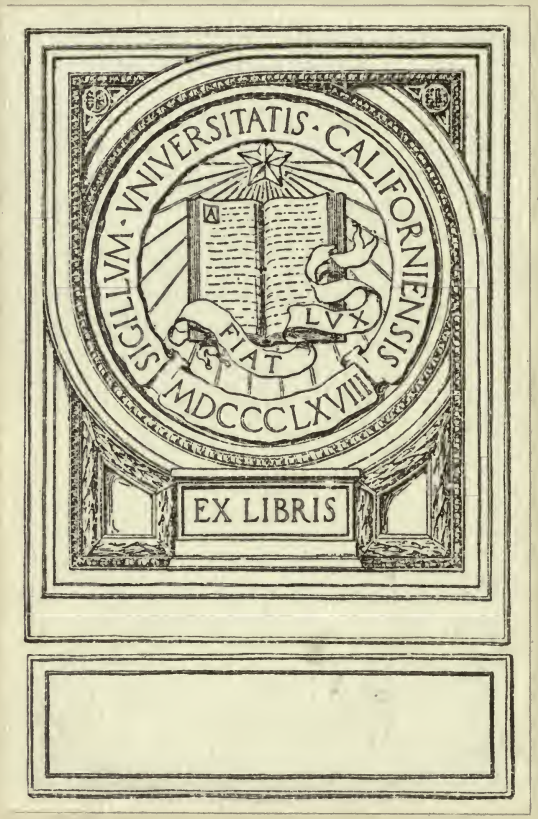
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MY REMINISCENCES

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

LADY BLUNT

Wearing Order of Chefakat, "Order of Virtue," presented to her by Sultan Abdul Hamid in 1886.

[*Frontispiece.*

MY REMINISCENCES

By FANNY, LADY BLUNT

Author of
"The People of Turkey"

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
ADMIRAL SIR ROSSLYN WEMYSS, G.C.B.

WITH PORTRAITS

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W. 1
1918

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DEDICATED TO

MY "EXTRAORDINARY NEPHEWS"

AND MY MANY FRIENDS IN THE

BRITISH NAVY

Malta, 1918.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

INTRODUCTION

By Admiral Sir ROSSLYN WEMYSS, G.C.B.

To many of the present generation the names of Sir John and Lady Blunt probably convey but little; but to those of us who are old enough to remember events of the last thirty years, they recall a very interesting period of history in which they played a prominent part.

Not only as the gifted authoress of *The People of Turkey*, but also as the wife of one of our most successful Consuls-General in the Levant, Lady Blunt's name ought to be enshrined in the grateful recollection of Englishmen.

Unfortunately, the English memory is short, and the rewards for meritorious work in the English Public Service are not, as a rule, adequate to the services rendered. Moreover, the general public is, more often than not, totally lacking in appreciation or even in knowledge of those by whose strenuous efforts and self-sacrificing labours England's power, influence, and good name abroad are upheld. How often after a life of patriotic expatriation do these men retire, only to find themselves strangers in their own land,

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and to spend a lonely old age amidst a generation which ignores all their toils on its behalf.

Naval officers, who are generally better acquainted with the fringes of the Empire, more readily realise the magnitude and efficiency of the work done by England's civil servants abroad, and there are many of them who will remember with gratitude the warm welcome and charming hospitality of "Aunt Fanny"—hospitality which was accompanied by such kindly advice and instructive conversation as can only be given by a talented and clever woman. Those who have read *The People of Turkey* will peruse with pleasure these memoirs, and will realise how great were the services rendered by Lady Blunt and her husband to the country.

R. E. WEMYSS, *Admiral.*

Athenæum Club.

PREFACE

I THINK it possible that my reminiscences, bound up as they are with the Near East and going back as they do to the early and middle parts of the last century, may prove of interest to my English friends at this present time when Turkey and Bulgaria, Greece and Albania are so much before the eyes of the world in the great drama of War at present being tragically played in Europe. I will not try to foretell the future, but I think there is interest to be gathered from the incidents traced on the tablets of my memory, of the conditions of life as they were in my childhood. My father, Mr Donald Sandison, had come to Turkey in the beginning of last century and settled in Constantinople as the representative of the East India Company. His business flourished up to the time of the Janissary Rebellion, in the reign of Sultan Mahmoud. During this rebellion my father's house of business, like many others, was not only looted and burnt down but his business was so thoroughly disorganised that it could not be built up again in Constantinople.

My father married Miss Mary Zohrab, whose family had originally come from Persia. There

were two branches of this princely house who had quitted Sistan in Persia during some revolutionary upheaval. One branch settled in Europe, the other, my grandfather's branch, settled in Turkey. My grandmother on my mother's side was a daughter of the Marquis de Serpos who belonged to an old Venetian family, who had also settled in Turkey, and of this marriage there were six children, three boys and three girls, of whom my mother was the youngest girl. The boys were all educated in England. Two of them, my uncles Edward and Paul, became distinguished men in the Turkish and Egyptian Services. The youngest son, John, equally clever and of great personal attraction, was a keen sportsman and settled down on a fine estate in Asia Minor on the skirts of Mount Olympus of mythological fame, where he spent his life hunting wild boar, bears, and other creatures which were then to be found in those wild regions, overshadowed by the snow-capped summit of that wonderful mountain. One of my aunts married an Englishman, the other, a very gifted girl, died of plague in Constantinople when about eighteen years of age.

I give these few details with regard to my forebears as I want my friends to know something of my genealogical tree, for, owing to my cosmopolitan education and versatile knowledge of languages, my origin I know has at times been thought to be connected with a variety of nationalities. Admiral Harris, in his interesting

book of travels in the Near East, describes me as a Roumanian when he gives a romantic account of my marriage to Sir John Blunt, which amused us very much. However flattering Admiral Harris' description of me as a Roumanian girl may be, I prefer to stand on the merits of my English nationality, for like all Britishers who are foreign or colonial born, I love the grand old country which has produced the greatest nation of the world, and claim it for my own.

It is now over forty years since I wrote my book, *The People of Turkey*. Much has happened in the mysterious regions of the Near East since that time. The Near East is a land of prosperous sunshine, interspersed with heavy storms of national disaster, storms which follow one another as the various Balkan States rise and fall. Each of these storms has left its mark, without, however, attracting any very definite European notice beyond that of one or two Powers deeply interested in passing events.

Many years have gone by since I left Turkey, but I have never lost the keen interest with which that country and its people inspired me. My experiences in Turkey were so varied that the desire to put them on record has brought about this volume of reminiscences. The wish to make my memoirs available for others was, I confess, greatly stimulated by my long stay in Thessalonica, the Salonika of modern days, and my good fortune in seeing so much of our glorious Navy, a good

fortune which can rarely, if ever, have fallen to the lot of other women.

My most grateful thanks are due to Dr May Thorne, who, fortunately for me, is now in Malta attached to the Royal Army Medical Corps, and who has given much of her leisure time to prepare my *Reminiscences* for publication. I am most grateful for her sympathetic and able help, for, without her encouragement and devoted work, I feel sure these *Reminiscences* would never have seen the light. I should also like to thank Admiral Ballard, Mr Ruck Keene, Dr Mizzi, Mr Alvarez, Mr Constantinidi, and many other friends, for their kind help in many ways.

In semi-savage countries like Turkey friendships develop and grow into delightful lasting intimacies. My husband and I had the privilege of many such friendships, which eventually culminated in my being adopted as "Aunt Fanny" by a number of young naval officers, who called themselves my "extraordinary nephews." Many of these "extraordinary nephews" are now distinguished men, as Admirals Sir Rosslyn Wemyss, Sir Stanley Colville, A. W. Waymouth, Mark Kerr, Allan Everett, Caley, Captains Sir Douglas Brownrigg, Cecil M. Staveley, and very many others, while the younger ones are fast mounting up the rungs of the ladder of promotion.

It only seems a few years ago since Jeanne and I measured some of these boys against the wall and registered their height in pencil marks. I mothered

them, mended their jackets, took care of their boxes while they went off on expeditions, while Jeanne, who was always looked upon as the special guardian of the midshipmen, at times got her little friends out of all sorts of scrapes, took care of their money and their watches, and generally acted towards them as a good elder sister.

It gladdens my heart to see these young fellows come in now and again with an extra stripe or two on their sleeves, and I feel proud and full of gratitude as they bend down and embrace me, and say in voices of genuine affection, "Dear old Aunt Fanny."

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As this Book is in great demand, it is respectfully requested that it may be returned to the Library as soon as read in order to facilitate other Subscribers getting it without undue delay.

CHAPTER I

1840-1850

I WAS born at Therapia, that beautiful suburb of Constantinople on the shores of the Bosphorus where the members of the Diplomatic Corps lived. Our house stood on the hill, and from the long terrace which ran down one side of it we had glorious views over the Black Sea, which was some two or three miles from us.

I was the youngest in a family of six children, five girls and one boy, and though I have no remembrance of Therapia in these very early days, yet I returned to it many times in after years and knew the house of my birth and the garden, and have often enjoyed the beautiful views from it. After my father's business in Constantinople had been destroyed by means of the upheaval caused by the Janissary Rebellion, he accepted, in the early days of Queen Victoria's reign, the post of British Consul at Brussa, one of the early capitals of Turkey, and the chief town of Bithynia when but little was known of Turkey, and still less of Brussa. Brussa at the time it belonged to the Greeks had been the centre of a

flourishing and fertile district, but the laisser-faire policy of the Turks had let these fertile lands fall into disuse, so that when my father planned to go there with his wife and young family, he was strongly advised to go alone and see for himself what the place was like. My mother, however, was so insistent that she should not be left alone in Therapia that on a fine autumn day we were all taken to Stamboul to embark on board an old Greek trading vessel bound for Moudania, the nearest port to Brussa.

We must have been an interesting crowd, travelling as people in the East so often do, with all our servants and furniture, and the numerous "hangers-on" which a considerable household and the kind-heartedness of my generous mother gathered about it. There were my father and mother, my sisters and brother, my nurse, a tall, dark, somewhat awe-inspiring woman, a Greek who looked upon me as a doll to be dressed up and kept out of all play and mischief, and from whose arms I rarely escaped, except to be set down on a chair or stool till she was ready to take me up again. How well I remember the feel of her strong arms as she carried me about!

Besides the cook and the usual household servants, the horse-keeper and the cow-keeper, there was an old Armenian whose only duties as far as I remember were to turn the spit of the meat as it roasted before the great open fire, and to clean the boots; an old woman and her daughter whose duties were never in the least defined, and a sort of idiot whom my mother looked after because nobody else would.

The weather was fine and a fresh breeze swept over the blue Sea of Marmora, and our journey was accomplished more quickly than had been anticipated. On our arrival at Mondania no one expected us, and after considerable delay a farmer was found, who, after calling upon Allah and expressing astonishment at the number of persons and things to be conveyed, said, "All the same I will do my best to procure a couple of horses and some mules for you. This is the vintage harvest, and in the village I can get you some grape-panniers which can be placed on the mules' backs, in which your children, God bless them, can be stowed away, and a man can be sent with you to ride on the pack-saddle and pacify the kicking beasts." My sisters, on hearing of this novel mode of travelling, refused to be stowed away in the sticky panniers like grapes being taken to the press, but, *faute de mieux*, they had to submit, and with many protestations got into the baskets and followed my father and mother who headed the caravan on horseback, and were followed by children, several dogs, the precious English cow, and an Angora cat. The servants, hangers-on aforesaid, and carts with furniture struggled along behind. It was now evening and the whole procession was escorted by a dozen or more tattered guards, armed to the teeth, as a protection against a night attack by brigands. The journey, well timed, neared its destination in safety in the early morning, when the first sight of beautiful Brussa was seen with the rays of the golden sun just touching the points of the minarets of the mosques and temples, with here

and there solemn cypress trees guarding the tombs of the saints. The whole earth, fresh and glistening with the heavy dew which is always present during the summer months, now showed on a wealth of flowers as the rapidly increasing light let their brilliant colours be seen. The whole place was beautiful to the eyes of our party as they approached the town. But these impressions rapidly gave place to feelings of disappointment, when the narrow, ill-paved streets of the town were entered, and stifling smells were encountered from the heaps of decaying dirt and vegetation which were on every side, the mangy dogs being the only scavengers of the place. They were depressed, too, to see the poor appearance of the unshaved Christians trying to hide themselves within the shadows of the doors and narrow ways as they went to their daily occupations. These poor appearances, we learnt later, were often deceptive, for the Christians found it imperative to give no sign of wealth or comfort, or they would assuredly have at once been oppressed by the Turks. On many occasions I have seen the interior of houses of an outward desolate poor appearance, and been struck by the comfort found in them. A Christian in those days was a dog to be harassed, starved, and thrashed on the slightest provocation. Little wonder that he did his best to hide away any slight possessions he had accumulated, so that he might in no way rouse the envy and spite of his lords and masters.

On passing to the Turkish quarter of Brussa our party found a great improvement. The houses were better built, the streets wider and

cleaner, the people better clad and of a more dignified appearance. My father was fortunate enough to have the offer of the best and finest house in one of the Turkish quarters. It had belonged to the last Dere Bey or feudal governor of that district of Brussa. The privileges of these Dere Beys or feudal lords originated from the time of the conquest of Asia Minor by the Turks. As the Central Power began to weaken and become less affluent in consequence of this system, Sultan Mahmoud at the beginning of the nineteenth century suppressed the whole system and confiscated the property of these feudal landlords, and caused some of the most troublesome ones to disappear. The Dere Bey of Brussa must have been one of the last to disappear, as his konak or mansion was in perfect order when handed over to us. Large, commodious, well situated, with the oriental finish of a fine garden, and a lovely Turkish bath built in marble. There was as well, a jail, or dungeon, which my brother and I explored as we grew a little older. It was a place of gloom, airless, dark, half buried in the earth, with its strong walls facing each other barely more than a foot's space between, the walls furnished with heavy chains to be placed on the feet and hands of the innocent or criminal prisoners kept standing till death released them from their suffering.

My mother, with her refined taste and with the furniture she had brought, soon managed to transform this Turkish konak into a comfortable and pretty English country-house, without losing any of its oriental charm.

The town of Brussa, bereft of its past importance and style, still possessed some fine old churches, mostly transformed into mosques, as well as a number of others built centuries ago in most exquisite Arabic style, an indestructible Roman bath, and a few bridges. The old bazaar was decayed and ruined.

There were a few coffee-houses and a big Han, a business resort where all the mercantile offices were placed. The town was almost divided into two parts by a lovely ravine which separated the Turkish from the Christian quarters. These latter, occupied by Greeks and Armenians, made but a poor show, for the reasons I have given. The Turkish quarter appeared better than it was by reason of the comparison with the poverty-stricken appearance of the Christian quarter of this neglected and abandoned capital of the Turkish Empire.

Of European society there was none, not even any foreign consulate. The Great Powers at that time were represented, save the mark! by a self-made consul, an Italian adventurer, Signor Fortunato by name, who had married a native woman and settled in Brussa where his knowledge of foreign languages attracted the attention of the authorities, so that on the rare occasions when a European visitor made his appearance in the country they referred him to Signor Fortunato. Thus encouraged, Signor Fortunato represented himself as a self-made consul for *all* the Great Powers. It happened a short time after our arrival that an old friend of my father's came to Brussa to pay him a surprise visit. On inquiring

of some of the townsfolk where the British Consulate was, he was directed to Signor Fortunato's dingy-looking abode. He dismounted from his horse, knocked at the door which was opened by a slatternly, barefooted maid-servant, who said the consul was not at home but the Signora would be glad to see him if he would come in. The maid led him through a sombre courtyard and stopped in front of a huge tub in which a dishevelled, barefooted, fat woman was pressing grapes. "Ecco la Signora," said the maid, pointing to the lady. The astonished visitor, horrified at the taste of his friend in the choice of his wife, asked her where Mr Sandison, the consul, was to be found. "I know of no consul but my husband, Signor Fortunato," said the wine presser, "if you wish to see him I will get out of the tub and send for him." My father's friend thought it best to beat a hasty retreat as he begged the lady not to disturb herself, and remounting his horse soon came across an Armenian who fortunately knew where we lived. My father, delighted to see his old friend, took him up at once to introduce him to my mother, who had been one of the most lovely ladies of Constantinople. Struck by the contrast with that of his recent experience, he could not help relating his meeting with Signora Fortunato, which greatly amused my people.

Strange to say the same evening he happened to fall into another adventure equally puzzling, if less amusing. My mother had transformed a lovely terrace covered with jasmine and honeysuckle into a summer dining-room. The terrace had a deep marble basin in the centre full of cold water which

gave a refreshing coolness. The dining-table covered with the whitest of damask effectually screened the marble basin beneath it. The evening breeze sweeping gently over the scented creepers caused the variegated lamps hanging overhead to sway to and fro, and these attracted the attention of our visitor, so that my mother forgot to warn him to be careful not to stretch his feet beyond the margin of the marble basin beneath. Whilst enjoying the hot soup he gave a sudden start and asked my mother whether a cold foot-bath formed part of our oriental welcome to a guest. "No," said mother, with an apology smothered in laughter, "it was a mere accident owing to my having forgotten to warn you to be careful with your feet." "Well," said he with a bow, "I can assure you, Mrs Sandison, that I have found your welcome as warm as this water is cold."

My childhood was spent almost entirely at Brussa, and a very happy childhood it was. My brother and I were great companions and had many adventures in the country together. We used to have lessons with the children of the American missionary who lived near by, and the daily interchange of ideas with a family brought up under such different hereditary influences to ours was an education in itself. Our holidays were frequently spent at my Uncle John's house on the lower slopes of Mount Olympus, where close to the garden was a lovely little limpid mountain stream, with the light glinting on the water as it flowed over a bed of silvery sand and multi-coloured pebbles, along the banks of which willow trees grew, and where there was a little spot

which formed a perfect bower. Here as I grew a little older I used to sit and dream of the time when I should be able to roam into regions and countries revealed to me by books of travel which impressed themselves deeply on my developing mind. I believe there is no power stronger and healthier than Nature in her beautiful and harmonious moods for the development of love and sympathy in ripening youth. I still remember some of the impressions of those happy days, and rejoice to think how the memories of those sunny days recur to me often even now, and how they have outlived the memories, or rather, are stronger than the memories of the sorrows which came to us even then.

Hadgi Eivat was the name of the small Turkish village my Uncle John had chosen to live in, and where he wished to cultivate his farm in the English style. An utterly hopeless plan, alas! in a savage country full of ignorant peasants, who rendered useless and even dangerous the agricultural implements he had had sent to him from England. A thrashing-machine, being the largest of his implements, attracted a good deal of attention without, however, any of the farm hands and onlookers realising its power and weight. My uncle himself superintended the trial of this machine, but during a few minutes' absence one of the peasants lay flat on the ground in front of it and allowed it to go over him, with the result that he was at once crushed to death. On my uncle's return he saw with horror the mangled corpse, whilst the peasants gathered round merely said "that it was the devil at work," and none of

them would go near any of the machinery again.

Soon after this event a case of savagery occurred through uncontrolled jealousy, which illustrates the small personal control which ignorant barbarians possess. A pretty, fresh-looking young Turkish girl lived with her husband in a single-roomed cottage by the roadside, which necessitated her going out of the house to fetch water from the well more often than her jealous husband liked. On one of these occasions, meeting her on the road, he pulled her into the cottage, threw her down and cut off her nose. My uncle passed by soon after, and hearing agonised cries went in to the cottage and saw the horrible cruelty which had been inflicted on the helpless girl. He asked her where the bit of her nose was to be found, but all he could gather between her sobs was, "pesherdi da yedi"—"he cooked it and ate it, he cooked it and ate it." My uncle doctored the wound as best he could, but as it healed the pretty little village maiden languished and faded away and died a few months later.

I hardly think any children can have had so free a time as we had during our holidays. My brother and I had many adventures as we roamed about the countryside. I well remember once when he was just beginning to smoke and puffed away at a pipe while we were walking through some fields watching the cattle grazing, that we noticed a solitary camel wandering along and gradually coming nearer to us, and repeatedly putting his head up and down and murmuring in the disagreeable way camels can murmur. Feeling

a little afraid of this evidently somewhat ill-tempered brute we began to run away, but the camel came after us considerably quicker than we could get away from him and gained on us fast. Searching hurriedly for some kind of shelter we noticed a gipsy tent close by into which we hastily ran. No one was there, but the camel followed fast on our heels, and though he could not get into the tent he pushed his long neck in and made the tent shake most alarmingly, whilst at the same time he breathed harder and harder in his rage at not getting at us. Frightened to death we hid ourselves under some heaps of horribly dirty rags and rugs lying on the tent floor, hoping in this way to escape the attentions of our pursuer. Firmly convinced that this was a cannibal camel bent on eating us we hid still more securely under the filthy coverings, and my brother put the pipe he had been smoking in his pocket. Presently to our great relief we heard a voice outside, and someone drove the camel out of the way, and then came into the tent. We were so hidden that we neither saw nor could be seen, but the language we heard when the man saw his coverings topsy-turvy was strong and forcible.

Our minds, excited by our recent adventure, were ready to be afraid again and with thumping hearts we both feared lest the gipsy, when he found us, would kill us and put us into one of his dirty sacks and carry us away. Soon he saw an arm and dragging us out accused us of trying to steal his hidden money. Standing us both in front of him he made us turn out our pockets. While we were trying to tell him the reason of our coming

into his tent the pipe dropped from my brother's pocket, when the gipsy laughed and said, "Now I understand why the camel followed you, camels love the smell of tobacco and will always follow anyone who has a pipe. You must go home now and take me with you, when you must give a large backsheesh to the old gipsy for having made use of his tent."

Those who have lived in the East know with what rapidity ravines ordinarily dry, are filled by tempestuous torrents carrying down with them broken branches, stones, animals, and other debris. One stormy looking day, I, an irresponsible child craving for adventures, most unwisely wandered away for a ramble by myself when I was overtaken by a torrential storm. Hastening back as fast as I could, I found that the ravine I had to cross had become a deep and foaming river. I stood on the bank, a desolate little figure with the thunder crashing overhead and the lightning blinding my eyes, wondering however I should get home, when I heard a shout behind me and turned to see one of the farm hands running towards me. He caught me up in his arms and powerfully swung himself across the torrent, and managed to escape the boulders and uprooted trees which came crashing down. We reached home knee-deep in liquid mud, and I remember being given a hot bath and put to bed and fed on a good bowl of bread and milk, and got no harm. But this was a storm of unusual severity, and on waking next morning I looked out of the window and saw the whole countryside flooded, and we were prisoners in the house for

several days. Animals of all kinds strayed in or near our farm, and one sight I shall never forget; an ass was there holding a dead wolf by the neck between his jaws. How the ass had ever been able to attack the wolf remains a mystery, but the villagers were in high glee at this extraordinary sight and roared with laughter as, with considerable difficulty, the ass was induced to give up his prey.

Another time my brother and I were playing in the garden when a couple of ill-looking, mysterious men came in by way of a gate which opened into a deserted side street. Frightened at their presence we scampered into the house and told my father who came out and ordered the men off. About half an hour afterwards when we had forgotten all about these men there was a great uproar in the street, and on looking out we saw a crowd of people, one of whom was holding a half-strangled boy in his arms. I remember the horrid blue look on the boy's face now. The man who held the boy was the child's father, who said he had seen two men trying to force what he had feared was the dead body of his boy into a sack. But as the men dropped their burden and ran away he had rescued his boy and brought him at once to the Consulate to seek redress and the expulsion of these ne'er-do-wells. These mysterious people turned out to be a set of primitive people who had pitched their tents near the tombs of Sultan Orham and of the saints and martyrs of his time, on the lower slopes of Mount Olympus, because they believed that great treasure was hidden in these tombs. The treasure so they stated could only be

found by those who lighted forty candles made of the fat from the bodies of forty children of the district. These candles were to be lit when the digging for the treasure commenced, in order to gain the favour of the spirit guarding the treasure so that it might not be turned into charcoal. I had quite forgotten this incident, but it was recalled to my mind by the recent description of the hideous method of the Germans to obtain glycerine.[1]

Rich as Brussa was in natural products, the town was unable to supply many of the ordinary necessaries of life. Neither were there any schools for the children, nor technical institutions for the youths, nor a hospital. Such educational institutions as there were, were the strictly religious colleges of the Medresses, which produced the most intolerant order of students called Softas. A court of justice (Mehkeme) was presided over by a Kadi or Judge, who sat on a sheepskin and gave judgment in accordance with the tenets of the Koran. The Christian population had no part in the administration of justice, and in cases of litigation between Turks and Christians the Christians invariably got the worst of it, as no Christian evidence was accepted in the Mehkeme, but on the contrary was suppressed or replaced by the evidence of the Turkish false swearers.

The Turks provided no means for the care of the sick; they were stern fatalists, and were quite content to rely on the prayers, charms, and relics

[1] The loss of treasure by being turned into charcoal, unless some sacrifice is made to propitiate the Guardian Spirit, is a very prevalent idea all over the East.

of their holy Sheiks, Mullahs, and Dervishes to kill or cure all their physical and mental ills. It was, I believe, subsequent to a report sent in by my father to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, then ambassador at Constantinople, on the condition of Brussa, that a Commission was sent by the Sublime Porte, presumably to please His Excellency. The Commission was composed of a group of Italian architects who knew nothing of the country or of the language, and who arrived in considerable style, wearing black frock coats and top hats, a costume which had never before been seen in Brussa. The Commission made a tour of inspection of the Turkish quarter in search of an adequate site for a hospital, and were much struck by the appearance of the main street, which was wide and clean and apparently deserted, and with plenty of space between the fine-looking konaks or mansions of the Turkish beys and hanoums. Well satisfied with one particular part for the erection of a hospital, they looked well all round, made notes and took measurements, and proceeded to plan out on the ground the area needed for the foundation of a big building. Little did the Commission suspect that they had chosen a place for the future hospital in the centre of a veritable beehive of enraged and alarmed Turkish hanoums, who watched all the proceedings from behind the jalousies of their windows, and were at a loss to guess why a group of men dressed in so strange and sombre a manner should by their unholy presence desecrate the privacy of their quarter. This unprecedented incident so keenly excited these ladies, who were ignorant of the cause for

which the Commission had been appointed, and were determined to show their strong condemnation of proceedings they disapproved of, that they ordered their eunuchs to unlock their gates and accompany them to the konak of Fatima Kadin Effendi, the doyenne and defender of female rights and privileges. On being admitted to the presence of this grand old lady, and after salaaming and kissing her hand or the hem of her long train, they laid their grievances before her. "Yes," replied the old Kadin Effendi, after listening to all they had to say, "I too have watched the doings of the infidels, and though I have heard of the reason why they are here I await the return home of the Bey to see what he means to do in the matter. Should he refuse to act out of respect for the Governor's orders we must act for ourselves." "How can we," said another old lady. "Of course," answered the Kadin Effendi, "my son must demand satisfaction from the infidels for daring to defile the privacy and sanctity of our quarters by their uncalled-for presence, and, at the same time, drive them out of the country for unlawfully trying to impose upon us, against the good will of Allah, preventive measures to stop sickness or any trials it may please him to inflict upon his chosen true-beloved Moslems. We can take this step in defiance of the new ideas of the Porte, and if need be, get the approval of our Kadi (judge) at the Mehkeme (court of justice), so prepare to follow my orders if necessary, not later than to-morrow afternoon. Get together a couple of hundred powerful women and, at an hour to be fixed later, let them enter the bazaar and go to the café where the infidels are in

the habit of taking their coffee." As the ladies obtained no satisfaction from the Bey the plan was carried out, and the following afternoon the door of the café, where the members of the Commission were peacefully sipping coffee and smoking cigarettes, was suddenly flung open and an infuriated group of veiled women, yellow slippers in hand, rushed in and pelted blows on the heads and faces of the amazed Italian architects. Outnumbered and taken at a great disadvantage the commissioners protected themselves by covering their heads with the stools they had recently been sitting on, and blinded such ladies as they could by putting their top hats completely over their heads. A regular pandemonium ensued and had reached its height when the door was once more flung open and Signor Fortunato, the self-appointed consul of all the Great Powers, appeared, accompanied by a body of police, who promptly turned out the veiled ladies and released the commissioners.

A few years subsequent to this battle of the yellow slippers some of the Great Powers followed the example of England in appointing consular agents at Brussa, chiefly with the object of opening the way for commercial interests with the interior of the country. This important step obliged the Turks to accept the inevitable and tolerate the presence of strangers in the land. It led to a few European families settling in the place, and a number of travellers visited Brussa and put a little more life into the neglected old capital. Among the visitors were a Russian Count and his wife, both very charming people, who were guests at the Russian Consulate; and as

my people were on intimate terms with the Russian Consul and his wife they saw a good deal of the Countess during the absence of her husband on a visit to Roumania. One evening when my three sisters were dining at the Russian Consulate the conversation turned on clairvoyance. The Countess asked my sister Nancy whether she would like to get a glimpse of what the future had in store for her. Full of the romantic ideas of sweet seventeen Nancy willingly accepted the invitation. She was seated in a chair placed in the usual way between two tables, on each of which was placed a mirror with candles, so that reflections were formed which simulated a long groove at the end of which there appeared to be a dark patch or disc. The room was darkened, and she was asked to sit down and fix her eyes and concentrate her thoughts. Later on she described to us that she noticed a faint mist which gradually cleared away, and a picture presented itself as taking place at the entrance hall of our home, where although she felt she was present yet as if the spirit and body were parted. A great crowd of visitors appeared to stand outside the door with sadness painted on every face, and looking at a table raised in the centre and covered with a black cloth on which a yellow cross was seen beneath a mass of flowers. A European with red hair and beard stood near the table bending over it with his hand supporting his head, and with tears streaming down through his fingers. None of the family were to be seen except my little brother Alfred, who appeared for a moment and was then lost in the mist which

spread over the magic disc. The Countess was the only one who could have understood this strange vision, but she declared it meaningless and wished my sister better success another time. This vision was much discussed in the family, but no one guessed what was in store for us. But alas! only a few months later, what had been considered a meaningless vision took the form of reality. My poor sister Nancy was one of the first victims of the epidemic of Asiatic cholera that dropped on the town of Brussa, much as many a bomb of the Huns has dropped on a "fortified village" in England, spreading death and destruction in every home it reached. In one night four of our servants were taken ill, and in the absence of medical care or any practical knowledge of treatment, died. The family, terrified by the calamity, were upstairs packing up in order to leave for the country next day. I was in my bed in the nursery when one of the native maids came to tell me that Marechon, the cook, was very ill. I, a little mite of five years old, ignorant of sickness or death, sat on her bed for a couple of hours and tried to help her. I well remember rubbing her cramped knees with an old stocking dipped in spirits. The poor creature asked me to get her some broth; when I had procured it and had her head resting against my chest I put a spoonful of broth into her mouth when her jaws snapped in a convulsion, and no power of mine could get the spoon out from between her teeth. In ignorance of her having passed away I went upstairs to tell my sister Sophy, who, horrified at hearing what I had been doing,

ordered me back to bed while she went to Marechon. This was my first acquaintance with grim death, but fuller knowledge soon followed. No sooner did we move into the country than the rest of the family, with the exception of my mother, Alfred, and myself were struck down by this terrible disease, and still no medical skill was available. Nancy was one of the next victims, and died after a very short illness. Matilda was in a most precarious condition. My father and my two other sisters were all for a time in a most critical state. My brave, active mother was distracted, for, where all needed her attention, it was difficult to know whom to attend to first. At the time of greatest anxiety Providence came to her aid, by the unexpected arrival of a clever Viennese doctor who, in a few hours, marvellously brought aid to this house full of dying patients, by administering to each a strong dose of laudanum, an unlimited number of little lumps of ice by the mouth, and by friction to the abdomen. I consider these details worth giving as they might be of service in an emergency. The dreadful results of the cholera visitation, so closely connected with my sister's strange vision and her sad end, obliges me to revert from one subject to another. My poor mother, while thankful for the recovery of all but one of her patients, was in great distress at the loss of her favourite daughter, and was unable to cope with the necessary arrangements for the funeral in Brussa. Providence again came to her aid by the arrival of an old friend who, on reaching Brussa and learning of the family's misfortunes, rode straight

off to help her, and at once relieved her of all anxiety with regard to the funeral. This friend had red hair and a red beard, and those friends who attended the funeral bore witness to the fact that it was in every way a repetition of the vision my sister had had.

CHAPTER II

1851-1855

After a series of somewhat monotonous years Brussa began to be more interesting, owing to the arrival of several groups of State prisoners from all parts of the Ottoman Empire. Some of these prisoners had been removed from their homes for the crime of protesting against the abuses of the Turkish Government, others, for daring to cast off the Moslem cloak with which, for a time, they had covered their Christian faith. There were also a number of political refugees as guests of the Sultan, chiefly Europeans. If I remember rightly, the first to arrive were some descendants of the family of Ali Pasha Tepeledin, that brigand adventurer who had come to the front in Albanian affairs at the close of the eighteenth century, and who by means of treachery and bribery had succeeded in obtaining the Pashalik (Governorship) of Janina from the Sultan. Ali Pasha Tepeledin had been beheaded in 1822 and his fortune, which was supposed to be enormous, is said to be buried deep in the sands of the river which flows by Janina. The children of Ali Pasha were reduced to penury and despair, and his son attempted suicide by swallowing a lot of arsenic. Regretting his action in time he is

believed to have saved his life by half strangling himself in order to prevent the poison circulating in his system, and by swallowing the whites of eighty eggs!

Another State prisoner was Emîr Bekir, a Kopt and a great Syrian chieftain. He was accompanied by his staff, which included an Archbishop who was both friend and father confessor. This was a very interesting set of people who appeared to have suffered much and who were full of dignity and Christian resignation. The Emîr looked like an old saint with his snow-white hair and beard, and with a reverent aspect of true submission to all the decrees of Providence. His wife, a charming young woman full of life and intelligence, appeared to be the chief controller of the establishment, guided by the Archbishop, who was a man of the world, well versed in the intricacies of Eastern life. It was said that it was at the wish of his wife and of the Archbishop that the old Emîr had decided openly to declare his old faith. His courageous wife had managed to get hold of the keys of the gaol and in the silence of the night had given freedom to one or two hundred members of the Kopt religion who were imprisoned on account of their adherence to their faith. Doubtless our ambassador must have protected the rights of these people, for previous to their arrival all the sacred ornaments and draperies of their chapel were sent under the care of the Consulate, and all the time they spent in the country their lovely little church, nestling in a verdant bower of the garden, was left unmolested by the Turks. They all looked so happy in the

peaceful security granted them, and enjoyed the blessing of freedom which enabled them to carry out their religious duties, a condition so very different to what occurred daily to many Christians in Turkey.

The famous Abd-el-Kader was a most fanatical Syrian chieftain who had fought against the French but was overcome and made a prisoner in the time of Napoleon III. Abd-el-Kader remained incarcerated in the Chateau d'Amboise for seven years, but was finally liberated by the Emperor and allowed to return to Turkey, where he was received as a guest of the Sultan and was given a fine konak (mansion) for himself and his family at Brussa next to our konak. This great Islamic Sheik of high religious repute among the followers of Islam was of delicate build, with regular features, curly red beard, and held himself with much oriental dignity, and was of a pleasing personality so that my mother had his name placed on her visiting list. His harem, however, was in marked contrast to himself. His chief wife looked a common woman, void of style or dignity. Abd-el-Kader's state apartment appeared to be the only decent place in the house. A Turkish sofa went all round the room. The walls were adorned by a single picture, a fine life-sized portrait of the Emperor Napoleon, which Abd-el-Kader pointed out to his guests with pride as a parting gift from His Majesty so long as there were any French officers in Brussa. No sooner, however, had the latter left the town than the face of the portrait was turned to the wall as evidently objectionable to his sight! Abd-el-Kader had a young nephew, Sidi Allal, who had adopted French manners, and though

handsomely dressed in the rich Syrian costume, also wore elegant French top-boots, which gave him a quaint appearance. He spoke some French and wrote bad verses, but was a very good dancer, an art he must have learnt in France where he had accompanied his uncle. He appeared greatly to enjoy this innocent pleasure at the small dances at the Consulate, but on his last visit he appeared in stockings only. As he was rather a friend of mine I at once went up to him and asked him whether he expected anyone to dance with a shoeless partner. "Que voulez-vous, Mademoiselle?" said he, almost with tears in his eyes, "my devout uncle has forbidden me to indulge in simple practices of this kind, and in order to save me from further temptation has had all my boots and shoes locked up." Poor Sidi Allal's punishment for his attempt at emancipation did not end there. A few days later he met my sisters going out for a ride and joined the party. Unfortunately on returning home they came face to face with Abd-el-Kader, who was on his way to the Mosque, and though Abd-el-Kader at once turned his face to the wall and stood there till the riding party had passed, yet he detected his nephew's presence in my sisters' company. The unfortunate youth was at once sent to the local gaol, where he had to stop for a week in filthy surroundings and in the company of the worst criminals. Incidents of this kind are common in the Islamic world leading to unfavourable comparisons between Christians and Moslems, the former so amenable to the influences of humanity and civilisation, the latter kept apart from both, owing to the intolerance of their religious dogmas,

which will never permit of an *entente cordiale* between the two races.

The following is another sketch of oriental life with some variations. Some highly educated Persian royalties, refugees in Turkey, had been offered the hospitality of the old capital by the Sultan. Prince Couli Mirza was said to have been a pensioner of England, the other prince whose name I forget was dependent on Russia's bounty. The third personage, a fairy-looking young princess, was the daughter of the Shah of Persia and the wife of Prince Couli, her cousin, with whom she had eloped. Besides her own retinue there were forty Persian youths who were supposed to be the sons of the princes. My mother called on the Princess and was charmed by her beauty and elegance and the distinction of her manners, as well as deeply interested in the account of the adventures of the whole group of persons making up their establishment, in their endeavour to avoid being caught by the pursuing force which followed close on their heels as far as the frontier. On returning the call the Princess asked us all to luncheon for the following day. Owing to the novelty of the invitation I looked forward to it with great childish delight. The Prince received us in the selamlik (the men's apartments), and led us in state through the mabhin or corridor leading to the ladies' apartments, between a line of forty handsome Persian youths, all salaaming as we passed. The Princess, surrounded by a group of her ladies, all young, pretty, and richly dressed in their lovely court costumes, formed, in spite of the shabbiness

of their surroundings, a picture I shall never forget. Some years later I managed to make myself a copy of one of those lovely costumes and wore it at a fancy dress ball at the Austrian Embassy at Constantinople. Luncheon being served, half a dozen girls bearing pretty silver basins and jugs, and holding embroidered towels, invited us to wash our hands before sitting down on cushions on the floor round a big silver tray which rested on a low stool. In the centre of the tray as *pièce de résistance* was a silver bowl containing rice, deliciously cooked, Persian fashion, surrounded by several smaller plates containing a variety of dainties. A long, beautifully embroidered scarf surrounded the tray and rested on our laps instead of table napkins. A piece of bread and a spoon in front of each person completed the arrangements of the table. The Princess placed my mother on her right side and extended her long, white fingers towards the bowl in the centre of the tray, took a handful of rice, rolled it into a ball, and making a hole in the centre with her thumb filled it up with a few trifles from the side dishes and held it up to my mother's mouth as her honoured guest. The rest of our party had to help themselves in the same way as best they could, but when it came to my turn to my dismay I found it impossible to manipulate the rice ball into its proper shape, or to convey it safely to my mouth. The Princess, much amused at my disappointed face, asked me to use the spoon which had been provided for me. After that, no one enjoyed the luncheon more than I did. There is a considerable amount of resemblance between the

Turks and Persians in their customs and manners, doubtless owing to the sameness of their creed. Were it not for one or two tenets there might be considerable friendship and sympathy between them, but these tenets keep them much apart. I believe the Persians must be more amenable to the influence of modern civilisation than the Turks. Our friends did not make a long stay in Brussa, and doubtless England had something to do with their speedy return to their own country. A few persons who were of European renown in my young days, but are now all forgotten, as they are either dead or have given place to others in the various aspirations and objects which forced them to leave home and country, came to Brussa. Among the interesting persons who arrived, subsequent to the *sauve qui peut* which followed the defeat of the Hungarians under General Kossuth by the Austrians, were General Kossuth and his family, Count and Countess Batthyany, General and Madame de Denbinski, and several others. Short as their stay at Brussa was we saw a good deal of them, previous to their departure, under the pressure of Austria, further into the interior of Asia Minor. Madame Kossuth had a little girl of my own age and I was often asked to spend the day with her. She was not very entertaining, but I was deeply interested in watching the ways and manners of these great people in their home life, ways and manners which did not come up to the standard I expected of persons in such exalted rank and position. At meals, for instance, I noticed the General used his fingers in preference to knife and fork, but in spite

of such failings in refinement he was a man of great personality and well worth listening to when he became animated and talked with his generals. Madame Kossuth, a homely looking person, hardly took part in the long discussions that daily followed meals. Count and Countess Batthyany, as well as some of the generals, struck me as being distinguished people with fine military appearance and courteous manners. They were all glad enough to leave Kutaya after some months' stay and return to the civilised world again. Those times were not wanting in revolutionary agitations, which in some cases ended in partial successes as in Roumania and Greece. The latter, after terrible sacrifices and superhuman efforts which had started in 1821, ended by obtaining her liberty and independence. This great event enters within the boundaries of my reminiscences as, rather later, when still a little girl, I became a great favourite of the celebrated Grisioti Andarti, who was one of the chief Greek rebels on Turkish soil, where he had lost everything but his life. He subsequently took to the mountains with his followers, killing as many Turks as he could, and living on what he and his men could find as free looters. In one of these encounters one of his arms was severely injured and partially severed below the elbow. He managed to escape and reach one of his dens in safety when, cutting off the injured part he plunged the stump into boiling tar which cauterised the wound and saved his life. Grisioti was a big, handsome man with a Roman (prominent) chest, and an intelligent, expressive face which greatly added to the interest I took in him. I first saw him as

one of the Sultan's pardoned prisoners sent to live at large in Brussa. An A.D.C. and one or two followers were allowed to accompany him. These latter often spoke of the tragic details of the war, and all my admiration and sympathy were roused on behalf of the heroes who had fought and suffered for the independence of Greece. The old Grisioti Andarti gave us a picnic on the heights of Mount Olympus which was to resemble as far as possible one of his old haunts in the wilds of Thessaly or Macedonia. A picturesque grotto embedded in creepers was fixed on as the place of meeting. As our party approached we were met by one of the chieftain's palikaris (followers) who, saluting, offered to show us the way. Presently we came face to face with the grotto, when suddenly out sprang the chieftain with a dozen followers, all armed to the teeth as if ready for action. Looking round on all of us he said, "Callos oriste," "You are welcome," and ordered his men to take charge of our horses. Grisioti then took me by the hand, and as we stood a little in advance of the rest of the party said, "Little girl, for this occasion I appoint you my chief. You will find my gallant followers ready to obey your orders, and in case any of our prisoners refuse to hand over their purses you must decide whether it will be their noses or their ears that will have to be cut off." Horrified and alarmed at such a suggestion I drew away my hand, saying, "I took you for a good man and a great hero who had promised us the enjoyment of eating a lamb cooked cleft fashion, instead of which you want to cut off the ears and noses of my people." "Well,

little girl," said he, with a hearty laugh, "those are the laws of our 'order,' but since you disapprove we will give them a free pardon and presently, after everyone has been made comfortable, you shall come with me and see how the lamb is to be cooked cleft fashion for our dinner." As good as his word, the old chieftain showed me what I have never forgotten, any more than I have forgotten the fun and delight of that picnic. Little did I dream at the time that later in life I should have to experience in reality what was then being acted in comedy.

My father always did his best to help and protect the various sets of refugees who came to Brussa, and their frequent comings to the Consulate did me much good service, for as a child I got to know people of various nations very well, and learnt all about their countries, their sorrows as well as their patriotic hopes and aspirations, and this knowledge enabled me to be of much service to my husband in later years. I well remember, for instance, that a set of Bosnian gentlemen (Christians) were sent to Brussa as prisoners at large. They were well-developed, handsome people, and I came to the conclusion then, and this opinion was confirmed when I came across Bosnians years afterwards, that they were the finest race in the Balkan States. They had an air of independence and a personality that was both charming and courteous. They were a population absolutely separate from the Turks and yet living amongst the Turks, and the Turks appeared more tolerant of them than of many of their Christian neighbours. The young Bosnian

women had much more liberty than most women of the Near East, even going to the length of choosing their husbands with whom they sometimes eloped. A custom of theirs at the birth of a child was for all the inmates of the house to leave it, with the exception of a very young girl who, so soon as the baby was born, ran to tell the waiting relations of the advent of the little stranger. For her good news the girl acquired certain privileges which brought her into close contact with the family. I do not know if many of these old customs still exist. Doubtless the Austrian occupation of Bosnia altered to some extent many of these quaint old customs of the people, but I believe neither Turks nor Christians felt happy under the control of a State which was largely dominated and crippled in its action by the silent but most powerful influence of the Jesuit orders then resident in Austria. About the time of which I am writing a fine school for girls was opened by Miss Irby and Miss MacKenzie which, I understood, did much good work.

The Roumanian political guests of the Sultan consisted of a prince, one or two statesmen, some distinguished artists, and one or two ladies. This group of guests had been educated in France, and were full of patriotic zeal and liberal ideas, and longed for the opportunity to put into practice in their own country much of the knowledge which they had acquired in France. I well remember an old Roumanian friend of those bygone days who had fought for the same cause the Roumanians are fighting for to-day, who often used to repeat in a rich, sonorous

voice, "Dieu, Liberté, Patrie." This group of people were cordially received at the Consulate by my parents, and my grown-up sisters had much pleasure in the society of the younger members of the party. I was rather an *enfant terrible* at that time, and well remember how one day, when running about the garden with my butterfly net, I came across one of my sisters and one of the young Roumanians looking at some object that was interesting them both as their heads were rather close together. I caught them in my net, much to the indignation of my sister, who boxed my ears for me, but her companion brought me a big box of chocolates next day! After staying in Brussa about a year the greater number of the elder members of the party left, whilst a group of the younger men remained to construct a very fine road between Brussa and Moudania. Doubtless many of our friends eventually returned to Roumania, where, under the able control of Prince Charles, they would have plenty of opportunities of helping their country.

During the Turco-Russian War of 1877 a secret convention was entered into by Roumania to tender help to Russia. Owing to the energy of Prince Charles of Roumania and his small army of about 35,000 men, the famous Graveio redoubt, the strongest fort for the defence of Plevna, was taken. The Russians were delighted at this unlooked-for strength of the small Roumanian force, and the Roumanians were pleased since it freed them from the nominal protectorate of Turkey. My husband followed this war on the side of the Turks, and greatly admired the bravery, tact, and

savoir faire of Prince Charles's men. He felt that if the Pashas of the Turkish Army, Osman Pasha and Raouf Pasha, had been granted free hands in this war, Turkey would have come out of it much better than she did. Raouf Pasha was an intimate friend of mine and was one of the witnesses at my marriage. I saw him last some time after the war when I stopped a night at his konak. One among many of the interesting details of the Turco-Russian War he related to me was when he and the Grand Duke were settling the Articles of Peace between the two governments. They were in accord up to a certain point, when suddenly the Grand Duke turned to Raouf Pasha and asked him to issue an order allowing six or seven hundred of his soldiers to visit the Mosque of St Sophia daily. Raouf, horrified at the request, said that it would be impossible to give such an order, since the worshippers at the Mosque had services of prayer five times a day and the presence of infidels would lead to a revolution in Constantinople. The Grand Duke, having by this request let the long wished-for Russian ambition to see St Sophia once more a place of Christian worship be known, pressed the matter no further, but patting Raouf Pasha on the shoulder smiled and said, "Et quand même, mon cher, cela viendra, et je désire que nos braves soldats apprennent le chemin de la Mosqué." Is this wish of the Grand Duke nearer realisation to-day?

CHAPTER III

1856-1857

Two terrible catastrophies must next be recorded in my memoirs—the Crimean War and the great earthquake which visited Brussa and almost annihilated it.

The Crimean War was felt indirectly at Brussa, since it was a place of interest to the Turks and their allies as a recruiting and provisioning station. Commercial travellers, contractors, and speculators began to crowd in. It caused us no small pleasure to see some of our brave soldiers on leave from the Crimea, full of news of the war in which we were so deeply interested. Compared to the present abominable war the Crimean War appears to my memory to have been merely child's play. The Turks were much behind European nations in the art of war, and were unprepared in every way to meet the heavy demands of so great an enterprise. As for Turkish soldiers, ever ready to answer the call to arms, they too lacked much that was needful, and had no experienced officers as the following story shows. A Pasha in high command had a clever Polish officer, an engineer, to assist him. On one occasion the troops were in a place that was strategically bad and likely

to be unhealthy should wet weather prevail. The Polish officer brought to his chief a map of the district and pointed out a position that would be better strategically and good should there be much rain. The Pasha despised the map which he was unable to understand, and said, "I must consult the shepherd of the goats of this locality as to what the weather will be." The shepherd on being summoned to give his opinion asked for a few minutes' grace in order that he might go and see his herd, and returned saying: "I have just inspected my herd of goats and find all their tails up. Sure sign of fine weather." "There," exclaimed the Pasha, "the camp shall remain where it is"; and it did remain there, with disastrous results to the health of the troops. According to stories current at the time, the Russians were no better prepared, part of their army being furnished with "show" arms made of wood in place of genuine rifles and swords.

There were also errors on the part of the English, owing chiefly to the want of proper organisation, which led to the sacrifice of many of our gallant soldiers. Large numbers of men became victims of the great cholera epidemic. Unlike the present time there were not sufficient means or knowledge either to relieve the suffering or to stem the course of the disease. Many of the officers and men who suffered from rheumatism, due to the exposure they had experienced during the bitter weather of the winter in the Crimea, found their way to Brussa, where they were greatly benefited by the quality and variety of the mineral springs that are situated some

few miles from the town. These springs had been made use of by the natives of Asia Minor from time immemorial, and during the Roman occupation magnificent baths had been built round the sources of the different waters. These baths were situated in the vicinity of a splendid mosque, and were apparently of indestructible solidity since they had withstood the ravages of time and miraculously escaped both Ottoman destruction and the earthquake. At Kucutlu there was a sulphur bath which was curiously constructed, but the details of which I regret I do not understand sufficiently to make clear to my readers. I can only describe it as I know it. There was a round marble swimming-bath some five or six feet deep, with foot-wide steps ranged round from the brim to the bottom. This large basin was of course full of water, and its edge was on a level with the marble floor of the bath-house, and at a good distance from the walls of the building which supported a dome the size of the round swimming-bath. It is possible to walk beneath the bath, when one sees that the basin-like portion is apparently held up by nothing, but it must of course be suspended from the edges of the bath-house floor. This under part is well worth a visit. The natives have no knowledge about it, and as it is rarely shown to visitors few people know of its curious construction. The iron and alkaline baths, equally strongly built in white marble but on a smaller scale, are most efficacious in their healing qualities. We used to spend a few weeks every autumn at this lovely watering-place, which had formerly been a favourite resort but which at the time I knew it, was reduced to a poor Turkish

village. There were a few indifferent places one could stay in, consisting of three to five mean unfurnished rooms, but with a wide verandah overlooking the rich country below, and with glorious views of the hills above. These hills were green and cool owing to the rich orchards containing every variety of pear, peach, and plum tree, as well as magnificent chestnut and walnut trees. The verandah, the views, the baths, and the fruit more than compensated for the poor accommodation. The bathers could roam at will in the orchards, and for a few pence to the tattered guardians could eat or carry away as much fruit as they liked. A perfect paradise for a party of young people as we were then. It is so long since I left Brussa that I do not know what condition Kucutlu is in now, but owing to the exodus of many wealthy Turkish families from Constantinople who have settled there within the last few years the place is probably much improved. Strange to say none of these baths were hurt by the terrific earthquake which took place during the early part of the Crimean War, and which shook the town to its very foundations and destroyed most of the buildings, and seriously damaged others such as ours, which were built of wood. The earthquake came with startling unexpectedness. We all, except my father, were in the sitting-room upstairs. I remember that, impecunious as usual, I was trying to raise some money by a sale of nick-nacks I had made. It was early in the afternoon when we noticed a jet black cloud on the horizon, and gradually the room became dark as I was

trying to pass off to my sister Matilda a faded book-mark. In addition to the terrifying darkness so alien to our usual brilliant sunshine, a stifling odour of sulphur reached us from the outside. At the moment when we were half suffocated and ignorant of the cause of this extraordinary condition of things there came the first violent shock which knocked us all down. This was followed by a succession of equally strong shakings. By the time we reached the door we found that the windows of our exceptionally large hall, and in fact the hundred windows of the whole konak (mansion) were cracking in consequence of the bending of the frames, and the glass was being scattered in all directions. The whole house shook and we feared its immediate collapse. We rushed to the staircase and clinging tightly to the balustrade we reached the ground-floor and ran into the middle of the garden for temporary safety. The shock continued, and in addition to the terror caused by the blackness of the heavens the walls of the garden fell, and clouds of dust were raised and added to our discomfort. It was altogether a most horrible, unforgettable calamity which destroyed half the town. A silk factory built on a soft stone rock came crashing down, and some three hundred young Greek girls who worked in it were either killed or severely injured. It was heart-rending to hear the moans and cries of some of the injured survivors caught beneath the debris, who were unable to be rescued in time. Our troubles were not ended with this terrific experience for the shocks, some quite slight, others more severe, continued for forty days and nights, an interminable

time so it seemed to us. We slept either in tents or just at the entrance of the hall; but if in this latter place we often had to rise hurriedly from our beds in the middle of the night and rush into the garden. The effects of this disturbed life soon began to tell upon some of us, and after the fortieth night on which the great perpendicular shock was experienced which did so much harm, we were thankful that the Ambassador, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, sent to take us to Constantinople. I need not say with what joy we left the ill-fated town during a shock of lesser severity, but which terrified our horses who neighed and stood with their legs stretched well apart and rigid till the shock was over. I thought my heart would break with joy when next morning, on reaching the port of Moudania, we first caught sight of a British man-of-war. It was with great delight that we enjoyed the welcome which the captain and officers gave to us and to the few ladies, friends from Brussa, who accompanied us. My father, unfortunately for us, remained behind, faithful to his post.

Everything appeared to me like a fairy dream after all the experiences of the last six weeks. I had been greatly terrified during the last shock before we left Brussa, as I had found myself a prisoner in the dining-room owing to the door being jammed, and although I threw myself out of a window into the garden, the fear I had experienced for a few moments when I thought I should have been buried alive remained with me for some time. However, such experiences in youth are not very lasting; the entire change of scene and life on board doubtless did much to quickly lessen the

memories of recent terrors. After eating an excellent dinner with which our good hosts regaled us, we all went to our cabins so kindly offered to us by the officers, who contented themselves with a blanket and a pillow on the benches of the ward-room. In my youthful selfishness I gave little thought to their discomfort, and getting into my nightdress with my hair down my back I got into my cosy little berth and soon fell fast asleep, but alas! having had so many recent experiences of disturbed nights owing to shocks and the need for jumping up quickly when unexpectedly awakened, I had a most ridiculous adventure. Some sudden movement of the ship must have disturbed me, and in a half-awake condition I jumped out of the berth, opened the door of the cabin and rushed into the ward-room, where I stood in the centre like a ghost in distress, gazed upon by half a dozen young officers. Wide awake now, and realising my ridiculous position, I covered my face with my hands and rushed back to my cabin horrified at my silly action; but, tired as I was, I tied my feet together with my handkerchief before I got into bed for fear of again being disturbed and rushing out once more. Next morning I was on deck early and watched the rising sun dart its fiery rays through the clouds flitting over the Golden Horn and on the solitary Byzantine palace mirrored in the calm waters of the Bosphorus. This palace was one of the very few that had escaped the ravages of the Turkish conquest. A few years later it was burnt to the ground, an incendiary act on the part of its inhabitants, the hanoums of the late lamented Sultan Medjid. In this palace or harem

lived several hundreds of old and young beauties, Kadin effendis, sultanas, odalisks, and slaves, who had been turned out of the Imperial Palace to be shut up within its solid walls. Justly resenting their monotonous lives they set fire to the building hoping to gain their liberty in the *sauve qui peut* that followed. But to go back to my own concerns. On hearing the breakfast bell I went below with rather a shamefaced look and took my seat at table, hoping my night's adventure might be attributed to somnambulism. However, no one made any remark about it. After breakfast we thanked the captain and officers for their kindness to us, and were then rowed ashore in one of the big boats and landed at the Tower of Galata, a filthy-looking place of business, crowded by Armenian porters who, as they saw us land, rushed in a body, fighting amongst themselves as to who could first get hold of our luggage. We mounted the two or three hundred steps of the dirty, ill-paved ascent to Pera, the European quarter, and reached the Grande Rue de Pera, a dirty neglected thoroughfare where numerous street dogs, the only scavengers of the place, were at work. We went to Messiri's Hotel, the only hotel that was then in existence I think. We stayed there but a short time, as the beautiful view of the opposite shore of the Bosphorus decided us to take up our quarters at Kadi Kieu, an old Turkish village, the right extremity of which was fast becoming a European resort. We chose for our home an old Turkish konak (mansion) on the Scutari side of the village, where the British Army was quartered. It was a pretty

house with a fine verandah overlooking the main road which skirted the seashore. We soon made a number of pleasant acquaintances among English people, and for the first time I began to realise the soundness, charm, and delicacy of English society.

That short time during the Crimean War was one of the happiest periods of my young days, every hour of which I enjoyed. In spite of my being still considered a child, I learnt much that served me later on. I was allowed to go to balls owing to the scarcity of English girls, and well remember the first one I went to. I had many partners, and inadvertently engaged myself to several at once for one of the dances late on in the programme. When the dance began my numerous partners all came to claim it, and I was in much perplexity to know what to do. My sister, who saw I was in some difficulty, came across the room to me, and apologised for anything I might have done amiss as this was my first ball. I hastily made a knot low down in one of the corners of my pocket handkerchief, and crumpling the whole thing in my hand except for the four free corners, said, "Whoever chooses the corner with the knot shall be my partner." These balls were given by the various Embassies in honour of the English and other foreigners, and were a great success, owing to the number of officers, the variety of uniforms, and the efforts made by the Levantine ladies to excel each other in their efforts to please. I heard a French ambassador say that the best company at Constantinople was the Greek, but

unfortunately the men did not come up to the mark. Of course no Turkish ladies appeared at these entertainments, and practically no Turks, except a few who held high official positions. Constantinople in those days was little known in England or the rest of Europe, yet it did not lack in interest and amusement to most of the visitors. Among the latter was H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge, who after a short stay went to Circassia on an anti-slavery mission with my brother-in-law, Mr Longworth, and my brother Alfred. The latter, though quite a young boy, was very useful owing to his knowledge of languages. His Royal Highness wished to place before the people the desirability of putting an end to slavery, and, since it was the women who were said to be those who played the chief part in maintaining this odious custom, it was deemed wise to try and obtain their favour by giving them presents that would appeal to their taste for finery. The bazaar of Stamboul was ransacked for stuffs suitable to the taste of these ladies, and numerous boxes of rahat lokoum (Turkish delight) were added to the attractive stores. The mission naturally caused a good deal of sensation, and the invitation of His Royal Highness to the women to attend a meeting, was accepted by them after a certain amount of deliberation.

Mr Longworth and my brother, under the Duke's instructions, made a good display of the fineries by spreading out the multi-coloured stuffs which had been bought, and endeavoured to make them more attractive in the eyes of the audience by distributing amongst them the boxes

of rahat lokoum, in the hope that these presents would more readily induce the women to give the needed anti-slavery votes. The Duke began his address by making a graceful appeal to the ladies for their assistance, to help his country and its great Queen in the efforts they were making to put down slavery, that cruel and inhuman custom so ruinous to the happiness of the children, and so painful to their parents. When the Duke's feeling speech came to an end, the elderly matrons with one voice asked the interpreter what the great English lord had said, and on being informed they started up like a set of demented furies, crying out, "How dares this great lord come to our country with the object of preventing our children from getting, through the assistance of the slave dealer and the market of Stamboul, the possibility, if their kismet (fate) wills it, of becoming raised to the rank of sultana. We will have none of these measures in our country any more than we will have his tempting gifts." Suiting their action to their word they pelted the astonished Duke and his party with the scarves and the rest of the fineries, while the boxes of rahat lokoum rolled on the floor. The mission having thus signally failed, the members beat a hasty retreat. But it was far from being fruitless, for from that time the persistent pressure of England caused the gradual disappearance of slavery in Turkey. Wherever there was a British Consulate and a slave desired his or her liberty, they had only to enter the gates of the Consulate, for the Consul had it in his power to get their release from the authorities.

In Salonika, for instance, my husband obtained the liberty of about a hundred slaves, chiefly blacks; to be rewarded for his good action by being named Baba (father) by this wretched community. It is doubtful, however, whether this humane measure of giving them their liberty is really likely to benefit them. So long as the Turks are allowed to continue their fanatical massacres of their Christian subjects, prisoners will be taken, and to be a prisoner is worse than to be a slave. An owner cares for and protects, at any rate to some extent, a slave for whom he has paid. He treats with cruelty the Christian prisoner he despises and who has cost him nothing.

Although during the Crimean War the Turks were expected to be fanatically disposed towards the Europeans, and though the enemy almost reached the gates of the capital, yet nothing of an alarming nature happened beyond a few incidents of a personal nature. In one of these cases my brother and my sister Matilda having failed to receive in time an order from the Embassy to abstain from assisting at a great Turkish ceremonial close to the Imperial Palace, ventured in that direction expecting to find us with a big party as had been prearranged. As Alfred and Matilda neared the palace the crowd became dense and they sat down on two chairs at the side of the street, without realising that they had fallen into the midst of a crowd of Softas who were a most fanatical order, and who closely surrounded them and violently threatened to murder them then and there. A fierce-looking nigger with dagger in

hand called out, "Shall I strike? Shall I strike?" when, providentially, a Turkish officer came to their rescue and led them to the nearest haven of safety. This happened to be the kitchen of the Imperial Palace where they were confided to the care of the chef, who gave them hospitality in his private apartment, and a choice lunch from His Imperial Majesty's table! When the crowd had begun to disperse a bodyguard of half a dozen kitchen boys, in red aprons and with bare arms, led the two chance adventurers into a safer part of the town. As a rule, however, though we, with other friends, often roamed over the bazaars we rarely had any reason to complain of acts of rudeness on the part of the populace. Often dear old Captain Borliss, the guardian of all the pretty young wives of the naval officers, took parties about the streets, and though he often felt anxious for the members of his parties, yet fortunately nothing untoward ever happened. Our soldiers walked freely about and attracted a good deal of attention. The Scottish Regiments were named "donsous" or "the breechless" by the Turkish ladies, whilst the Albanians proudly said that the kilt was a copy of their own "foustanelas." The Crimean War was begun and ended on an honourable basis, free from disgrace or remorse on either side of the belligerents. Fortunately for the brave generation that fought its battles, "German culture" was still in the nursery rearing and developing the monsters she has produced, bent on the destruction of the nations she has failed to conquer or beguile. How deeply must Turkey and her associates in misfortune bewail their connection in this

murderous war, out of which they well know they have nothing to gain either in material profit or in the esteem and sympathy of the rest of the world. Turkey is doomed and she deserves to be left "chiplac" (naked), as prophesied by the late Sultan Abdul Aziz who hearing, whilst in his bath, of the birth of his son and heir said, "The country under his reign will be reduced to the nakedness I find myself in when hearing of the news of his birth. All will go."

But what about fair old Greece and her brave sons brought to death's door by her erring king, who has been an enemy to his own country while earning the smiles and favours of the Kaiser. It is to be hoped that with the help of Providence and the patriotic efforts of M. Venizelos, justly named the "Saviour" of his country, that all will be well. To go back to the Crimean War. At its termination all the foreign forces began to take their departure from Constantinople leaving behind a dull monotony difficult to put up with even for those accustomed to live in Eastern countries where, socially speaking, the Government counts for nothing, and where the brighter and better half of the population is kept under lock and key. We were much pressed by our departing friends to leave for England too, and my mother decided not to lose the opportunity of travelling with friends, particularly as she wished to go to England then in order to be present at the wedding of my sister Matilda with Mr George Ricketts, a bright young officer of the 5th Dragoon Guards. At the same time mother thought my brother and I might take up our neglected studies better in England than else-

where. We both spent the two years we had in London more profitably than in book work, by seeing all we could of the marvels of that huge metropolis, for it is not possible to spend some time in the dear old country, breathe its pure healthy air, study its system, its organisation and greatness without learning a good deal that serves in later life. On our return to Brussa after our delightful two years in England our party was reduced to three, *i.e.*, my mother, my brother, and myself. I shall never forget the storm we experienced in the Atlantic. For three days and nights there were no fires in the engine-rooms. My cabin had a foot of water in it and yet I never got seasick or nervous, nor did I cease begging our kind captain to let me go on deck to watch the grand effects of the terrific storm. He consented at last, and at my request roped me to the great mast where I thought I should be perfectly secure. However, when the sudden impact of a huge wave carried off one of the long benches, the captain enveloped in his oilskins crouched by my side and asked me if I had not had enough. Before I could answer a terrific gust of wind struck the mast and broke it and the upper part fell crashing on to the deck. Fortunately neither of us was hurt, but I thought it was time for me to go below. As the weather calmed down the passengers began to show themselves at breakfast and on deck looking very green and seedy. Among the passengers were an English lady and her young and pretty daughter who soon became great friends with three Englishmen, well dressed and good looking. Somehow, my brother and I did not care to make their

acquaintance, nor did we join with them in a photographic group in which the English lady and her daughter took part. Later on, the latter, when dining at the Embassy at Constantinople came across, much to their discomfort, their late friends who served them at table with grace and *savoir faire!*

My brother and I were full of regret at having to leave England and return to Brussa, in spite of my dear mother's cheering encouragement that "tout vient à temps à qui sait attendre." Unfortunately young people are not always endowed with patience, and we felt ours would quickly vanish if we were destined to rusticate in Brussa without even the chance of making a stay in Constantinople. My father was very glad to have us back and so was our favourite Uncle John, known all over the country as "Chelebi John" (Gentleman John). Fortunately the country had not lost its old charm for us, especially for my brother, who became a great sportsman and settled down on my uncle's farm, where he had plenty to occupy his time and to interest him. It was a grand place for big game before a huge fire, which lasted for forty days, broke out and partially destroyed the forests. The fire started on the eastern side and gradually worked its destructive way in the direction of Brussa. It was a glorious sight to watch those grand old trees blazing away. As the fire approached the town the Armenian community came to the Consulate in a body to beg for help, as their quarter would have been the first to be burnt had the fire spread so far. My father naturally applied to the Pasha, who, twisting and

turning his hands in real distress, said, "What can I do, Consolos Bey, what can arrest such a scourge if it please Allah to inflict it upon the country." My father persuaded the Pasha that the fire was not Allah's work but the charcoal burners' neglect, and that it could easily be stopped from reaching the town if he would get half the men of the place out to cut down the trees and leave a large bare space between the blazing forest and the Armenian quarter. The advice was taken in time, and Brussa was saved from a second calamity which, in its way, would have been as great as the earthquake.

Soon after this event my brother disappeared and for a week we heard nothing of him, when a letter came from him from Constantinople asking that some of his clothes might be sent to him, and adding that as he had had enough of Brussa he had in a moment of desperation got on his horse just as he was, with a hand-bag, and two fine potatoes from the farm, and had gone to Constantinople. Here he had presented himself to Sir Henry Bulwer, our Ambassador, and a very old friend of my mother, and had offered him his two fine potatoes. His Excellency, on hearing whose son the boy was, and much amused by the originality of the youngster, looked him up and down and, struck by his personality, asked him to be his guest, and sent him down to work in the chancery. This was the beginning of my dear brother's distinguished career and of his valuable services to the Government, first as dragoman and then as oriental secretary.

CHAPTER IV

1858

My brother's departure was a sad loss to me as he had been my best friend and chief companion from childhood, which accounted for my distaste for dolls and games more adapted to girlish enjoyment. I loved Nature and all her wonderful works that strike the youthful attention and elevate the mind to regions incomprehensible in their entirety, but sweet to dwell upon. But time passed on and my solitude ceased to trouble me, and I felt happy to see my dear mother so pleased at the unexpected result of my brother's venturous enterprise. I had a most pleasant break to the monotony of my life by the arrival of a party of Constantinople friends, which included the interesting Monsieur le Baron de Lesseps, one of the brilliant celebrities of his time, whose charming personality won every heart. It is well known how his wonderful energy and engineering skill produced the Suez Canal in spite of extraordinary difficulties. The Brussa season was at its height and an expedition to the summit of Mount Olympus was planned, to my great delight. We rode up the lower slopes through densely wooded forests. Presently the ascent became steeper, and, if I remember rightly, it took

us some seven hours to reach the snow-clad summit, the last part of the journey being accomplished on foot. The lovely scenery and the bracing effects of the cool breeze appeared to have an exhilarating effect on all the party, with the result that we started on a race to see who could reach the top first. In my foolish, childish conceit I took the lead, ignorant of the fact that we were walking on an immense bridge of snow, beneath which a silently flowing river found its way to the margin of the plateau to fall 1000 feet in a cascade below. As I neared the goal of my ambition to my intense horror I felt myself gliding down to eternity. Fortunately when I had slipped but a few feet Monsieur le Baron de Lesseps came to my rescue, and with great presence of mind and agility saved my life, with no worse results to me than a good ducking and the loss of my hat.[1]

A few days after our visitors had left I received a letter from my sister Sophy asking me to join her at Constantinople and to accompany her to her new home in Bitholia (Monastir), the old capital of Macedonia, where my brother-in-law, Mr Longworth, had been appointed Consul. This trip was to end the first period of my youth with all its joys, its sorrows, its illusions, and its delusions; all had to be left behind on my entering

[1] Some years ago a good deal of public attention was drawn to the mysterious disappearance of an English traveller who had gone up Mount Olympus and was never seen again, nor was his body found in spite of careful search. In that solitary region was a band of Albanian shepherds, cut-throats, within whose mandra (fold) no one thought of looking, and where, according to Keridly Mustapha Naily Pasha, after the murder of the traveller the body had probably been buried.

this new phase of life. I had a vague idea that my sister intended to keep me with her. Fresh from England, I confess I did not relish her plan, but the die having been cast, I put the best face on it that I could and we started on our journey *via* Salonika. We went on board an antiquated cast-off paddle-wheel steamer belonging to some Greek company. The voyage was neither comfortable nor pleasant, but worse was to come. On the third day we reached Salonika, where we landed in a small boat on the sandy beach as there was no harbour or landing-stage. Dozens of shoddy looking Jewish boatmen surrounded our steamer, fighting, swearing, and screaming amongst themselves for the first customers. I thought we should never see the end of the fray, until there arrived a clean, good boat occupied by a handsome, bright-looking, young Englishman who scattered the boatmen right and left and came on board, cordially shook hands with my sister, and was formally introduced to me as Mr John Blunt, Vice-Consul at Uskub in Albania. This very energetic young man soon got us ashore with our baggage, and, in the absence of any hotel, drove us to the house of Mr Calvert, the then British Consul at Salonika.

Next morning we started for Vodena, half-way to Bitholia. After a stormy night at this lovely place, as guests of the Greek Archbishop, we made a fresh start on posthorses for our final destination. In spite of the absence of proper roads, of broken bridges, and of overflowing torrents, we reached Bitholia in two instead of three days. Dead tired as I felt, I cheered up as we got on to a good bit

of road shaded by two lines of trees, a mile from the town. This bit of road ended in an ill-paved main street which, however, was wide, and both sides were occupied by the best buildings Bitholia could boast of. It looked nice, and I was glad to see the Consulate appeared to be one of the best amongst the houses. My brother-in-law was absent on a mission and Mr Blunt stayed at the Consulate as his representative.

On the day after our arrival half the town called on my sister. Except for one or two consuls and a small number of officers belonging to the Turkish Army, which at that time had its headquarters at Bitholia, there did not appear to be anybody likely to be of great interest to us. The rest of the visitors consisted of a mixture of Turkish beys, Albanians, Greeks, Wallachs, Bulgarians, and a few others who, stiff and upright, sat on the edge of their chairs. The ladies who came were mostly wealthy Wallachians and looked like dressed-up boards. I had no idea, till I saw them, that any human beings could be so straight and thin as these ladies were from head to foot. When we were relieved of the presence of the somewhat trying company I could not help expressing my disgust at Bitholia's social resources. My sister laughed, saying, "Never mind, later on you will find plenty to interest you in this part of the world."

No doubt the country itself looked pretty and interesting, in spite of the fact that nothing remained in the way of buildings to attest to its past wealth and grandeur, as everything had been rased to the ground by the destructive Turkish

conquest, in accordance with the dictum of the Turkish creed, "first the souls and then their belongings." Several incidents shortly occurred which were of interest to us. The first was the sudden appearance of a very fine-looking Serbian girl, armed to the teeth, who had walked all the way from Serbia to seek the chastisement of a young Turk attached to the medical department of the army as a dispenser, who had promised to marry her in her own country during the Turkish occupation, and had afterwards deserted her. The base deceiver was no longer at Bitholia, but my kind, charitable sister at once offered the girl hospitality till she could go back to her own country. About the same time another girl, this time from Kurdistan, arrived, dressed in man's clothes. This one had found her way to the Crimea in search of her lost lover. On finding that her lover had been killed she entered the army in order to vindicate his death, and, in spite of being a woman, fought with such bravery and success that within a short time, none doubting the sex indicated by her clothes, she rose to the rank of "Ramazan chaouch," *i.e.*, a sergeant made during the period of Ramazan, a religious festival. As a "Ramazan chaouch" she followed her regiment to Bitholia, when it became known to the authorities that she was a woman. His Majesty the Sultan ordered that a pension should be given her for her services, and this was at once awarded, but owing to the greed of the official hands through which it had to pass it never reached her. She therefore came to the Consulate to plead for assistance to help her to obtain her pension. During one of

her daily visits she came face to face with the Serbian heroine and unwisely began with much vigour to discuss the war. This led to a hand-to-hand fight, the Serbian catching up a kitchen knife, the "chaouch" a pair of tongs. I had the greatest difficulty in separating these women, who, forgetting their personal grievances, tried to kill each other *pour l'honneur de la patrie.*

At this time the Turkish Army was, I believe, at its worst—impoverished in substance, and short even of the few necessaries the brave Turkish soldier needs. Except for a few of the superior officers, the army gave one the impression of a tatterdemalion body of disorganised men. Among the generals of this army were several naturalised Poles and Austrians, and such well-known Turks as Osman Ghazi and a few others who were disposed to make changes in the organisation of the army, and who had the services of a French officer attached to the staff of the commander-in-chief as advisor. Of the German element, as far as I can remember, there was no one of note. Polish officers were the most numerous owing to a fine regiment which had been formed under the command of General Tchaykovsky; but this regiment only lasted a few years because of the jealousies and intrigues of the anti-Christian party. The army, however, such as it was, gave some life to the otherwise dead alive old country which was neglected, and its fine natural sources undeveloped. My brother-in-law, struck with the wealth and fertility of the country, bought a big estate for a couple of thousand pounds; but when he tried to cultivate

his property the neighbouring Albanians, armed, marched down in a body and threatened to shoot everybody on the place. The authorities being powerless to stop the Albanian depredations returned the amount paid by Mr Longworth, and took the estate over as Government property. Such was the condition of Bitholia (Monastir) over half a century ago. One evening, some time after our arrival there, when my brother-in-law's return was hourly expected, we heard a great clatter of posthorses at the gate, followed by a violent ringing of the bell. Mr Blunt, who happened to be below, called out in his impulsive way at the top of his voice, "Mrs Longworth, Mrs Longworth, Longworth has arrived." My dear sister, who adored her husband, rushed downstairs and fell into the arms of the traveller as he came into the hall before the lights were brought. The traveller so tenderly welcomed, instead of responding, was doing his best to free himself from my sister's embrace. When the light was brought she found to her dismay that the newcomer, not unlike her husband in general appearance, was a total stranger. In order to punish what she considered an ugly joke on the part of Mr Blunt, she boxed his ears, and apologised to the stranger who introduced himself as Mr Dan Garden, M.P., on a trip through Macedonia. In the absence of any hotel my sister naturally offered Mr Garden the hospitality of the Consulate, which led to a fresh adventure in the evening owing to the stupidity of the maid-servant. This servant was a Slav, a silly, grinning creature, who was ordered to get Mr Blunt's room

ready for Mr Garden, and put a mattress and pillow in the drawing-room for Mr Blunt. She grinned assent and left the room, to rush back ten minutes later shouldering the mattress and accessories which she threw down in anger, saying, "He wanted to murder me with his revolver." On inquiring who wanted to murder her, she said, "That solemn looking visitor who, as I tried to lay the mattress on the floor, sat up in his bed, saying, "Istemem, Istemem" ("I don't want, I don't want.") We naturally thought that Mr Garden, who had quickly fallen asleep after his long journey, had been annoyed to be disturbed by another person's bed being brought into his room, just the thing we had endeavoured to avoid. When I greeted Mr Garden next morning he was looking a little more solemn than on the previous evening, and was busy bandaging his felt hat on to his knee, saying that this was the best cure for rheumatism. Similar incidents of wearing strange costumes in the Near East are of the commonest occurrence, especially among English people, who have often well earned the sobriquet of "mad Englishmen" by turning up in clothes so extraordinary that crowds of children follow them in the streets. I recollect seeing a traveller from India, who was, I think, the maddest of mad Englishmen, with rows of beads round his neck, and a hat on his head surrounded by a range of little windows which opened and shut when he pressed a spring!

After a few weeks in Bitholia I had heard and seen so many strange things that I began to think my sister had been right in telling me

that I should become more interested in the country later on. There were lovely rides all round the country, which Mr Blunt and I greatly enjoyed, as well as the company of each other. As we became better acquainted our friendship, as such friendships often do, ended by our becoming engaged, and our marriage speedily followed, in spite of the difficulties caused by the absence of my brother-in-law, and the possibility of arranging for a marriage ceremony in the non-existence of a Protestant Church or missionary. I had much to do when once I had made up my mind to cast my lot in the wildest regions of Albania. There were the arrangements for the marriage, my clothes to make, my house linen to get, and a thousand and one other things to arrange, of which the most difficult was to arrange for the marriage ceremony. On the return of my brother-in-law a family council was held on ways and means.

My sister proposed the Roman Catholic service, which I refused, chiefly because it meant changing my faith on account of *hors de l'église point de salut.* Mr Blunt proposed the Turkish nikiah or marriage, which he thought would be quite binding, as it was a national institution. I refused this suggestion with indignation, owing to all the privileges of a Turkish marriage being on the side of the husband. Divorce, for instance, he can obtain solely by ordering his better half "to cover her face," not to mention the still greater right he possesses, that of having as many wives as he chooses. Mr Blunt, who was only joking, as he wanted to raise my indignation,

apologised humbly for his pretended ignorance of these important points, and turned the whole thing into such a farce that we all joined heartily in the merriment which ensued. My brother-in-law, now awake to his responsibilities, offered his privileged services for the civil marriage, and suggested the Orthodox (Greek) form for the religious ceremony, which I accepted willingly, as, unlike the Roman Catholic Church, there is no obligation to change the form of faith which is very like our own, *i.e.*, no belief in the doctrine of transubstantiation. His Holiness the Archbishop of Pelagonia kindly acceded to our request that he would perform the religious service, and the wedding was fixed for 25th November 1858. We all became very busy preparing for the event. My kind sister concentrated her energies on the confectionery, and prepared a beautiful wedding cake as well as many delicacies for the ball which was to follow the wedding. Mr Blunt and my brother-in-law helped us by approving or disapproving the arrangements. As for me, I had to become dressmaker and seamstress, and cut out and prepare my wedding dress which, as luck would have it, turned out a great success. I had, at the same time, to prepare two gala costumes for two little blackies (slaves) who, during the absence of Mr Longworth had taken refuge in the Consulate, thereby causing Mr Blunt a good deal of trouble to get the order from the Pasha to liberate them, in accordance with the English convention on the anti-slavery question. They looked nice little girls between thirteen and fourteen years of age,

the one a regular Central African type with hair like a Turk's head broom, the other an Abyssinian with soft curly hair and regular dark features. As they were homeless I decided to take them under my care and bring them up as maids. These children entered into all the preparations with great joy, and stood and watched the marriage ceremony and the ball in the evening with wide open eyes and gaping mouths. No doubt overcome by sleep they disappeared, to be discovered later on by my husband fast asleep under the bed, with their little black legs protruding from beneath the vallance. It was luck, I thought, that in their savage ways they had preferred the floor rather than the bed to sleep on. The last day of my girlish freedom was not very cheerful, as my thoughts would go back to the past and the many plans and dreams I had made as regards the future, with its bright vista of life in a civilised country like England, with all her wonderful works of art and civilisation within the reach of rich and poor to enjoy in perfect peace and security under a well-ordered government. I could not help comparing this with what I had bound myself to in the future. In spite of the assurance I had of having secured a very happy home-life, I felt very low and depressed. My fiancé noticed my unhappy looks and asked me what was the matter. I told him all I felt and thought. For a few minutes he looked very sorry and concerned, but soon brightened up and said: "My dear child, do you imagine that I am the sort of man to be held down in a wild country like Albania? Every

career must have its beginning, and I am not at all sorry to begin mine in Albania; but you can rest assured it will be for only a short time, and will end so soon as I have mastered and informed the Government of all that is worth knowing. So cheer up, and like me, think better of the future, which I promise to make as happy and cheerful as I can." This comforting assurance chased away all my sombre thoughts, and, recovering my good spirits, I began to think of the morrow and its complicated ceremonies in a brighter light. There was still much to be done, for in Bitholia we could get no outside help, nor could we obtain many things usually thought to be indispensable, but *à la guerre comme à la guerre*, and we had to do without them. The ceremony was to take place at the Consulate. An altar had to be arranged in the centre of the drawing-room, and two huge wreaths of orange blossom with white ribbon bows and long ends had to be made (these latter had to play an important part in the marriage ceremony), as well as many smaller details connected with the religious service. There were two things which I flatly refused to do, one was to be paraded all round the town in my bridal costume, the other to be kissed by all the company when wishing me happiness. I accepted the good wishes but avoided the kisses by carefully keeping my bridal veil down.

Next day soon after a few select visitors had come, His Grace the Archbishop of Pelagonia in his splendid gold-bespangled vestments, accompanied by his deacon and half a dozen priests in the pleated robes and with their imposing

kalmosks (copes) over their long curly hair, walked slowly and quietly into the room and took up their appointed places. There were also a combare or best man and two witnesses, Raouf Pasha and Hassan Pasha who were Mohammedans. The service which was short but imposing began by my brother-in-law performing the civil portion of the service in English, followed by His Holiness the Archbishop reading the marriage service in Greek, and by placing or rather crowning both my husband's and my head with the orange blossom wreaths. These were exchanged three times on our heads. He first held them over our heads and then exchanged them to the other, each time repeating, "In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." At the same time he exchanged our wedding rings in the same manner. Good wishes in the form of grain and bonbons were showered on us after the blessing. I should think but few weddings have been of so composite a character as ours. My brother-in-law was a Roman Catholic, His Holiness was the head of the Orthodox (Greek) Church, we were members of the Church of England, and our two witnesses were Mohammedans.

The ball in the evening was a great success, and I thoroughly enjoyed it as my husband and some of the officers proved to be excellent dancers. The journey to our home at Uskub had to be undertaken on posthorses, and as this was the rainy season it was not very pleasant. The bad roads were sometimes knee-deep in mud, and when crossing streams the horses were often up to their girths in the water, and yet in spite of all, since we

were both good riders, the journey was done in two days instead of three. Uskub, as we entered it, impressed me as being a bright and cheerful town. The Consulate was situated outside the town on the fine Vardar river and appeared from the outside to be a large house, but within it proved only to be half finished and was tenanted by large numbers of doves and blackbirds whose cooing and singing broke the monotony of the solitude. The first faces we saw next morning were those of our two little blackies who had just arrived with the baggage. Much to my amusement visitors soon followed, headed by the Governor. There were also the Archbishop of Uskub, some Albanian brigand boys, the Hodjabachi or headmen of the Christian communities, which were composed of Serbs, Greeks, and Bulgars, who all appeared anxious and pleased to make my acquaintance as the first English woman that they had ever seen in their country. The establishment of a British Consulate must have been a great event and deeply interesting to the inhabitants. Next morning we made our first appearance in the main street of the town, arm in arm, and soon after callers came to make inquiries as to the Consolos Bey's state of health on the supposition that he must be very ill since he only went out walking supported on his hanoum's arm! The Christian ladies next came in groups to call upon me. Some looked nice and pretty in their rich native costumes, often, however, made ridiculous by their attempts to improve these by a mixture of English and French fashions, such for instance as crinolines under their wide trousers

or bloomers, elastic-sided boots, and the hideous black silk or satin men's neckties of the day, which fastened with a spring. I could not help smiling when I thought of the effect this motley company would have made in a drawing-room at home. Yet these ladies looked dignified as well as satisfied with themselves. After sitting down each lady produced a bag mysteriously hidden in her garments, and brought out a lot of genuine jewellery with which they began to ornament their heads and persons. I asked them how it was they did not put on their jewellery before coming to pay their call on me. "No fear of our doing so," said they, "if we ventured into the streets with our treasures exposed, the Albanian beys would take them all, and we should never see them again." Although familiar as I was with Turkish, Greek, and a little Bulgarian, the conversation was neither flowing nor interesting owing to there being nothing in common between a free, civilised person and those ignorant, long-suffering creatures. As I was full of work and care in my efforts to set in order my small establishment, neither I nor my husband had time to give to the Uskub social circle. My husband, like the dear he was, set to work carpentering, papering the few habitable rooms, and working at the sewing machine. In a couple of weeks we settled down and organised our daily mode of life with the help of the two little blackies, a native boy my husband had saved from slavery, and a good, intelligent native woman who had freed herself from slavery by running away from the konak of a rich Dere Bey whom the Porte had seen fit quietly to clear out of the way. This

woman who had kept out of sight for a time offered her services to me as cook. We had also engaged a groom who I found was stealing our provisions, and when he had the audacity to tell me that a fine goose which was in the larder ready for cooking had flown away he had to leave us suddenly. Fortunately grooms were not difficult to replace. We also had a fine young Albanian guard, Hussein Aga by name. After we had trained our staff somewhat the establishment began to look something like a home. Strange to say, all this work had absorbed our thoughts to such an extent that we lost all record of time so that we celebrated our Christmas a fortnight too soon. As we sat down to our first Christmas dinner together my husband produced a bottle of champagne, a trophy of the Crimean War, to celebrate the happy event. My plum-pudding, with which I had taken so much trouble, came in at the same time. Pleased with the product of my handiwork my husband cut into it, when to my amazement I noticed the spoon would go no further than a few inches. "Try another side," said I, with tears of disappointment in my eyes; "but what can be wrong when I myself measured the ingredients, mixed them together, and tied the pudding up." My amused better half made another dash into the inner part, when to my horror and humiliation what should come out but a whole egg in its shell. The incident was so preposterous that I at once sent for the cook for an explanation. "Madam," said she in a fury, "it was by your orders that I put in the eggs in their shells." I then remembered having asked her to boil a couple of eggs in the pot in which the

plum-pudding was boiling for a salad I was making, and she, mistaking what I had said, had thrust the eggs into the pudding. Fortunately the pudding was none the worse. The post came in at that moment after some considerable delay, and on opening a letter from my sister Sophy I found a pressing invitation for us to go and spend Christmas at Bitholia. It was only then, on comparing dates and counting up days, that we realised we were celebrating Christmas a fortnight before 25th December. We came to the conclusion that there must be something wrong either in the air of the place or with our own selves to make us lose record of even time itself.

CHAPTER V

1859-1860

The monotonous life at Uskub began to tell on both of us. My husband, who never knew what idleness was, occupied himself mastering all that was worth knowing about Northern Albania and its inhabitants. I believe he had only two cases during the two years we were at Uskub in which his Consular assistance was claimed. The first was the murder of an Ionian (British) subject. This man was murdered close to the town by a local Bey, who, on the day following the murder, coolly walked into the town and was arrested at the instigation of my husband by a body of police whilst in the shop of an Albanian costumier, when he was on the point of paying £50 for a rich costume he had just chosen. The day following his arrest all his womenkind came in a body to me begging me to get their Bey liberated, as they thought that, Turkish fashion, they might bribe me to persuade my husband to get the Bey freed. The Bey was not hanged, as Sultan Abdul Medjid was averse from capital punishment, but was imprisoned for a time. The women evidently thought nothing of the crime the Bey had committed.

The second case was that of another Ionian

(British) subject who rushed into the Consulate in an agitated condition, asking the Consul's assistance as his wife was about to have a baby. This funny incident Mr Blunt turned to his own use years later in Boston, when a very inquisitive lady newspaper reporter walked into his office to interview him respecting the duties of a consul in Turkey. Recollecting this incident he solemnly related it to the lady, who, evidently scandalised, put her notebook into her bag and hastily left the office.

Besides the absence of British subjects in Uskub there was no commercial connection, nor indeed any kind of connection with England. The Consular work consisted in reports on the neglected and impoverished state of the country, and on the habits and resources of its people, who greatly depended for their existence on produce stolen from the unfortunate Christians who lived in the towns and villages. The cattle, corn, and indeed everything the Albanians could lay their hands on, they carried off from the Christians after inflicting the most cruel and terrible outrages.

Looking over Sir John's Uskub correspondence nearly every paper I take up is labelled "Albanian atrocities"; and yet strange to say as a tribal people the Albanian Ghegs possess certain strict unwritten laws for the regulation of their home life with regard to the virtues of honour, honesty, and morality, which are far more rigidly enforced with them than among many more highly civilised and law-abiding peoples.

From time immemorial the Albanians have committed every outrage, every cruelty and injury

on those who were not protected by their code of honour. As I lived among these people for two years, 1858-1860, and saw and heard much with my own eyes and ears, I feel convinced that for ages to come no power will break off the old well-established Albanian habits of utter disregard for life and property outside their own people. I consequently cannot help feeling deeply for the misfortune of those Christian towns and villages, barely free from their slavery under Turkish control, who are to fall beneath the yoke of the projected enlarged Albania. This will be worse than Turkish slavery, especially for the unfortunate Greeks of Epirus. This part of Greece, little known in England, counts for one of the finest and most patriotic parts of the old country, which for centuries has been at the head of the liberating national movement, and is known to have spent much of its wealth in embellishing Athens, and in subscribing funds to be utilised in the happy event of liberation. Should this project of an enlarged Albania come to be realised the blow will be terrible to the Greeks of Epirus, and the pacific healing difficult to accomplish. At the time we lived at Uskub it was an unknown part of the world, and remained so till the railway was built about a score of years ago, which brought it more into evidence. The railway, I believe, has not brought any great change or improvement to the country itself.

When the novelty of life in savage Albania had subsided we began to have a great longing to get away. I looked after my menage and took long rides into the country, fearless, thanks to

our perfect security from Albanian attacks, due to the great name England had acquired all over Albania, on the return of the Albanian forces from the Crimean War. These forces had been officered by Englishmen, and England's name stood for justice, honesty, and greatness. The kind care the Albanians had received at the hands of the English made them known and spoken of in every hamlet. As a matter of fact during the two years I spent in that wild region, none of the Albanian attributes of savagery ever came nearer to me than by report. The Turkish Governor himself was far from enjoying the security that we did, for, while we could go anywhere we pleased, he could not move out of his house without an escort, and even in his konak he was not safe, as a pistol shot at His Excellency was of almost daily occurrence.

Among the few interesting natives I came across in Uskub was a venerable old Sheik, reported to have much success with the dreaded effects of the evil eye, as well as for his gift of predicting the future.

As his services were offered free of charge to man and beast, Hussein Aga, our Albanian guard, asked him to come and see my favourite horse "Swift," which was sick. "Swift" was a fine racehorse from the Crimea, which had been given to my husband. I went to the stable to watch the old Sheik's treatment, and found it consisted of spitting and blowing into the mouth of the horse, and pulling its ears. Wonderful to relate, the poor beast soon shook off the effects of its sickness, brightened up and neighed, and looked

at me for a bit of sugar. I thanked the old Sheik and asked him in my most fluent Turkish to come and have a cup of coffee. He willingly accepted. When my husband left the room, the old man with his deep-set eyes asked my leave to predict what the future had in store for us. I accepted. Who could have refused such an offer, living in such a place as Uskub? "Your husband, the Bey, is a man possessed of very fine qualities, and of great bravery and courage. He will have a long, wandering life, doing a great deal of good, but he would do better still for himself if he would follow your advice."

The Sheik was not wrong in his prediction. I for one rarely, if ever, came across a man like Mr Blunt who put aside his own interests in order to serve his country.

"Khanum" (madame), said he, "Uskub is much too small a place for you, and the sooner you leave it and get to a place where you can exercise your brain power the better. Your life will be a long one with cares and joys, and will not end as happily as you deserve." In all probability I should have forgotten all about this prophecy but for its parting words, which alas, have been largely realised!

A wealthy Armenian of Constantinople, Mardiros Effendi by name, came to Uskub on business. He was clever and amusing and my husband and I enjoyed his company, notwithstanding that he was a bit of a coward, like most Armenians were, under the Turkish administration. Mardiros had a somewhat embarrassing adventure while at Uskub. He took rooms facing the

konak of the aged but liberal Kadi (judge) of Uskub, and as he was well dressed, of agreeable presence, and living in good style, he soon attracted the attention of the old Kadi, who was greatly pleased to have Mardiros as his neighbour and often went to see him. After a time Mardiros felt a certain amount of curiosity with regard to an opening in a jalousie of one of the windows in the Kadi's house opposite to his rooms. The opening was slightly enlarged and allowed two pretty fingers, one ornamented by a beautiful ring, representing the emblem of love among Turkish ladies, to appear. The opening went on enlarging till he could see two lovely eyes looking at him. Impressed as he was, Mardiros resisted the temptation of responding to the advances of the lovely girl, one of the wives of the Kadi, no doubt bored to death in her closely confined life.

One evening she asked of her husband, the Kadi, leave to go to a wedding in the neighbourhood. Instead, however, of preparing for a wedding she dressed up in the Kadi's robes, and with a shawl over the turban went across to make the acquaintance of her neighbour. She knocked at the door, the servant opened it and led her upstairs, announcing to his master,—

"Effendi, the Kadi has come."

Once well within the room she cast off her disguise and, amazed by her beauty and her courage, Mardiros stood speechless gazing at her, and thinking it would be death for both of them if her childish adventure were discovered. But she, more amused than frightened, laughed and said, "Effendi, where is your courage, your manliness?

Is this the way you receive the friendly visit of a neighbour? Take example from me and look pleasant. The Kadi Effendi being out, I thought to replace his company with advantage."

Our friend, ashamed of the poor figure he was cutting, began to look more alive, when there was another knock at the door and the servant rushed in saying,—

"Effendi, Effendi, the Kadi has come."

Whilst her host once more became helpless she looked about, and seeing a recess covered by a curtain hid behind it just as the real Kadi walked in. Finding Mardiros in a speechless condition, the Kadi said he was sorry to have disturbed him, but as his wife had gone to a wedding he thought he would come and spend a pleasant hour with him. Poor Mardiros, now more dead than alive, as he thought of Madame Kadi within a few steps of her husband, felt, so he told us, that his last hour had come. Fortunately the considerate Kadi soon took his departure, but only just in time, as the next moment Madame rushed out saying she was suffocating and Kadi or no Kadi she must come out. There ended his adventure, which points out that even a Turkish girl kept under lock and key will gain her liberty at times. Next day Mardiros moved to the opposite end of the town.

Out of genuine sympathy or curiosity I called at the harem in question and was struck by the charm of the veiled beauty, who had a look of melancholy in her young eyes that roused my pity and sympathy.

As my husband had predicted our stay at

Uskub was of no long duration, for before two years were quite gone he was instructed to go on a mission of inspection over Macedonia and report on the result of a Turkish Reform Expedition made under the pressure of England. The Turkish Government sent Kibrisly Mehemet Pasha to carry out the suggested reforms.

Since I could take no part in this expedition, and as I did not care to remain at Uskub alone, my husband kindly suggested that I should go to Constantinople for a change. I accepted the proposal with *empressement*, so we soon started on our separate ways. I took my inseparable "blackies" with me, and accompanied by our brave, intelligent, and faithful guard, Hussein Aga, I undertook the long land journey to Gallipoli, and then took steamer for Constantinople. I had rather despised Constantinople on my arrival from England some three years previously, but now the place looked to me like a terrestial paradise; even the "blackies" seemed to appreciate the change. My brother met me and we drove straight to Therapia, where he had taken a small, pretty house for me belonging to my dear old nurse, just opposite to the house in which I was born.

Soon old and new friends began to call upon me, and I felt the dreadful Uskub depression clearing from my brain. Sir Henry Bulwer was still Ambassador in Turkey, and both he and Lady Bulwer were extremely kind to me. Sir Henry Bulwer and Lord Lumley took great interest in my statements about Albania and the little profit there could be in keeping on the Vice-Consulate at Uskub in so hopeless a country.

At the same time I pleaded my own cause so earnestly that both the Ambassador and Lord Lumley promised to do their best for a transfer for my husband. The time proved opportune, owing to a certain amount of political agitation at Constantinople. England was pressing hard on the Porte for the promised reforms in European Turkey. On the other hand, the Bulgarians had begun to wake up concerning their national rights and religious grievances against the Greek Patriarchate. In their anxiety to obtain support from wherever they could, they tried to interest France, and went so far as to make conditional promises that the Bulgarian nation should become Roman Catholic. The bait took at the Vatican. A fine Jesuit College was built at Salonika for the education of Uniates. An ignorant, worthless Bulgar priest was found willing to change his religion, and he was sent to Rome to be consecrated as the Bishop of the Uniates. On my husband's return from his mission in Macedonia, he was sent to Philippopolis to investigate these matters. He found the place upset by a Greco-Bulgarian polemic, *re* the ascendancy the Greeks had assumed over the Bulgarian churches to the exclusion of their own priests and of the Bulgarian language. The difficulties which had brought great dissension between the Greeks and Bulgarians were originated by the Greek Patriarch at Constantinople, the head of the Orthodox (Greek) Church in the Near East, as well as in Greece and in Russia. In course of time most of the states professing adherence to the Orthodox (Greek) Church

detached themselves from the Patriarch. Bulgaria being still under Turkish dominion led to intolerable abuses, such, for instance, as the confiscation by the Patriarch of churches built by Bulgarians, and his prohibition of the Bulgarian service being read in any other church. The fight continued for years and came to be a national question, and staunch patriots like Mr Stoyanowich, Mr Vulkowich, Dr Tchomakoff, and others worked with the most astonishing zeal and activity in their efforts to wake up the Bulgarians out of their ignorant trance. My husband and I were much interested to watch the Bulgarians use every means they could to obtain the support of any foreign power willing to help them. My husband mastered the whole question, but limited his action to keeping his Government informed of what was going on. There was a good deal of the Machiavellian policy in their methods with foreign powers after the fiasco with France and the Vatican. Hoping for better success with the English Government, the Bulgarians made a proposal through Mr Blunt similar to that which they had made to France, namely, that they would accept the English national religion in return for English assistance. Mr Blunt listened with attention to their request, then turned to the deputation and said, "Gentlemen, I thank you for your important offer, but I regret to say that were I to see you all on your bended knees taking your oaths for carrying out this measure, I would not believe you."

After looking at each other the deputation rose in a body and asked my husband to shake hands

with them, saying, "You are perfectly right, sir, but necessity at times impels us to do strange things."

These were among the first steps the Bulgarians took to gain their independence in religious matters which years after they obtained by separating entirely from the Patriarch by the creation of the Exarchate at Constantinople. My husband supported the rights of the Bulgarians to hold their own services in their own churches and in their own language.

Mr Blunt's attitude in this matter raised the hatred of the Greeks, who tried to revenge themselves by filling their newspapers with abusive stories about him. My husband, naturally sensitive with regard to these reports, wrote to me to ask His Excellency whether he should reply to them. Sir Henry smiled, saying,—

"Have you seen one or two reports about me in the *Levant Herald?* I have just been informed that the author of these unflattering reports is the same man who has come to me to beg permission to reply to them. Unflattering reports in Levantine newspapers have no importance attached to them."

While my husband was endeavouring to clear up the rights and wrongs of the Bulgars and Greeks I was thoroughly enjoying myself, and received much kindness from everyone as a young grass widow. The French Ambassador kindly put the key of his lovely garden at my disposal, which facilitated my daily visits to my dear brother at the Embassy, by shortening the distance, as otherwise I should have had to go a long way

round by the road. I also had the privilege of using M. l'Ambassadeur's fine horses, and greatly enjoyed riding all round the lovely hills bordering the Bosphorus. The presence of the Diplomatic Corps, which happened to be there at the time, gave much life and animation to the summer season.

I had the pleasure of meeting Mrs Suchodolska, the daughter of General Tchaikovsky, a clever, accomplished woman, who had been brought up in Paris by the Princess Czartorjska, and who became my greatest friend.

Mrs Suchodolska was but little known in Constantinople, and the French Ambassador meeting her at my house, asked me "Dans quel bosquet avez-vous ramassé ce bel eglantier." She was, however, better known in Austria than in Turkey, and received an offer from the Austrian Government to go on a mission for three years to Russia, with the object of collecting all possible information with regard to the constitution and working of the Russian Army. The salary for this arduous task was left for Mrs Suchodolska to fix. She was told that going from Turkey she would be less suspected of trying to gain information than if she went from Austria. Mrs Suchodolska talked the matter over with me, and we came to the conclusion that she should refuse it, since the post would be a risky one, owing to the espionage prevalent in Russia, and might lead to her banishment to Siberia. I merely mention this incident to show how, even in those early days, the Powers were heading against each other and building castles in the air

on their future possible conquests. England, France, Italy, and Austria were much to the front in those days, and even Russia, in spite of the fact that she had always been looked upon as a deadly enemy to Turkey. Germany was not thought much of. The first I heard of her using her influence was an act of confiscation of the lovely piece of ground on which the German Embassy was built. The property had belonged to an old Patrician Greek family, but was taken from them no doubt with the connivance of the Porte. The unfortunate owners tried hard to obtain something for this valuable property, but without success so far as I know. England was far ahead of any of the other European Powers in her influence in Turkey, as the Turks from all time had a liking for the English, so far as their creed and sympathies would allow them to have a liking for any Christian nation. Abdul Medjid's sympathy and liking for England naturally had its effects on the nation. Fond of reforms Medjid made several good laws, but unfortunately he had neither the knowledge nor the courage to see them carried through. His ministers were good and wise men, several of whom were staunch partisans of England, earnest patriots whose faults and errors, however gross they may have been, were not of the treasonable character of the present Young Turkey party who would ruin their country by selling it to Germany. I remember my brother telling me how pleased Abdul Medjid and his entourage were to hear of the projected visit of H.R.H. Edward, Prince of Wales. This visit was the great event of the

day. The Grand Rue de Pera was repaved for the occasion, the streets cleaned, and a variety of oriental embellishments made, which added much to the natural beauty of the place. On the arrival of His Royal Highness the streets were lined with dense crowds of people of various races and costumes, which formed a picturesque ensemble not to be met with out of the Near East. The Embassy court was filled with British subjects anxious to welcome the beloved popular Prince, the future King of England.

Lady Bulwer kindly asked me to stay at the Embassy during the visit of the Prince. I much enjoyed meeting the pleasant people the presence of His Royal Highness brought together at the Embassy. I liked to watch the dignified sympathy with which Sir Henry and Lady Bulwer kept up a pleasant cordiality in that cosmopolitan gathering of Turkish grandees, foreign ambassadors, and other distinguished people.

The Prince himself, young, handsome, and full of life, gave the keynote to his host and hostess by his kind and thoughtful courtesy, and even insignificant I engaged part of his attention. A big dinner was to be given to the Turkish authorities in honour of the visit of His Royal Highness, and on talking over the arrangements, the Prince asked who was to be placed next to him at table. Sir Henry, in accordance with etiquette, suggested the Grand Vizier and Ali Pasha, Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Prince laughed, saying, "What can I have to say to those two fat old Turks; better put Mrs Blunt

next to me, with whom I could have a pleasant talk."

Poor Sir Henry, nonplussed, thought for a moment and saved the situation by saying that I could be placed next to the thinnest of the Pashas, so that a conversation could be carried on in front of him.

The charm of the Prince of Wales' manner and conversation made a deep impression at Constantinople, and the whole population tried its best to get a glimpse of the future great King of England, Edward the Peacemaker.

CHAPTER VI

1861-1862

The Sultan and his people appeared gratified by the visit of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales to their capital. The members of the Diplomatic Corps must have felt pleased to have the opportunity of exercising their pens on so unusual an event by stating to their respective governments their views and opinions on the apparent *rapprochement* between England and Turkey. Be this as it may, the excitement of the visit over, the cosmopolitan society settled down to its usual current of life. Owing to its many privileges Constantinople was looked upon as a pleasant and interesting official post by European diplomatists.

My husband's interesting reports on Philippopolis, which was fast assuming importance as the headquarters of the Bulgarian national movement, helped our desire for a change, and resulted in the transfer of the Uskub agency to Philippopolis. In spite of the long tedium of the journey I decided to go to Smyrna in order to become acquainted with my husband's family. I took one of the Messageries Imperiales steamers, I believe the first fine liner that appeared in Turkish waters. The sea journey was very

pleasant, and Smyrna appeared to me to be the gem of the Near East. I wonder how much of her will be left after this terrible war! The Consulate was a fine, spacious building, well suited to my father-in-law's large family of five daughters and two sons. On my arrival, and during the time I spent at Smyrna, a fine British man-of-war was in port. The sight of the Flag filled my heart with joy by rousing the deep love and admiration I always felt for our naval service. During my short stay at Smyrna I was most kindly looked after by the captain and officers, who furnished me with a good hamper of provisions for my journey to Philippopolis.

I took steamer to Cavalla, where our Consular agent, Mr Whitaker, and his charming young wife put me up while I waited for the arrival of Hussein Aga, our faithful Albanian guard.

The country being infested by Albanian brigands at that time necessitated my asking my host for an escort; but he could recommend none worth taking, and said the best plan would be for Hussein Aga to engage two or three of his compatriots as escort. Fortunately for me the three men Hussein wished to engage had a fight between themselves, and Hussein told them we should have no need of their services. This led to a quarrel with Hussein, which ended by the ruffians vowing to attack us next morning on the road. The outlook was not very cheerful, but we started off and after an hour's ride reached in safety the dangerous pass at the head of the valley. I began to feel more easy in my mind when we were nearly through the pass. The

descent was stiff but we hastened on, when, on turning a sharp corner, we sighted three shepherd boys walking three fine horses up and down the road. On seeing us they put their fingers to their lips as a signal for silence, whilst with their left hands they pointed to a small tumulus or mound where the three brigands were waiting for us. Fortunately for us the men must have been drinking heavily, for now at the critical moment they were fast asleep. The shepherds signalled to us to gallop on, and by taking their advice I had my first safe escape from brigands. The rest of the journey was safely accomplished *via* Adrianople. Philippopolis seen from a distance is most effective. The upper part of the town rests on three small hills overlooking a fertile plain encircled by a graceful range of hills, with villages dotted here and there, and by well-conditioned monasteries. I believe this part was chiefly inhabited by the Paulician Sectaries, and higher up the mountains by the Pomaks. The Pomaks were a fine set of mountaineers who remained faithful to their creed (Mohammedan), yet who lived in perfect harmony with their Christian neighbours. My husband came out part of the way to meet me, looking very well and very happy to welcome me to our new home, and I was so rejoiced to see him that I felt impelled to cry aloud to the wide country to tell it of my joy. Mr Blunt was staying as a guest at the house of Mr Stoyanovitch, the chief member of the Bulgarian community. Both Mr and Mrs Stoyanovitch were extremely nice people, he, a much travelled Europeanised man,

she, a sweet kind woman who spoke Greek perfectly, and they both gave me a hearty welcome. We stayed with them for three months till a house to our liking could be got. The change from desolate Uskub was very great, and I was very happy and enjoyed the small circle of acquaintances we made. Besides the native element, chiefly composed of Bulgarians and Greeks, there were two delightful American missionary families whose company I greatly appreciated, and whose earnest, simple lives I much admired. They had not been long in the country and did not know much about it, but the people of Philippopolis, more advanced than those of many other districts, had received them kindly and soon began to value their presence as advantageous to the country. Bulgaria owes a great debt of gratitude to the American Robert College at Constantinople, which helped to develop the intelligence of the students and roused sentiments of patriotism among the Bulgarian youths, who subsequently served as beacons of light to the rest of the nation awakening from its trance of long years of apathy. Besides Robert College, schools for boys and girls were opened by the American missionaries in some of the principal towns of Bulgaria, where a liberal education, free from religious pressure, was given. The good work these institutes did was little known outside their own spheres of activity, nor was it sufficiently appreciated by the unintellectual sluggard masses of the people. It will take a long time for the Bulgarian nation to shake off the innate barbarism of its nature, and it has led rather than followed

the Huns in their inhuman treatment of the Serbians. The cruelty and intolerance of Bulgarians are all the more regrettable since they possess certain good qualities, but they have not the capacity to use them to advantage. Unfortunately, like the rest of the races in the Near East, the sense of honour and rectitude are the least developed of their virtues.

Subsequent to my husband's transfer to Philippopolis some of the other Great Powers nominated Consular agents. Educated European influence had always a good effect in these semi-barbarous countries which make up the Balkan States, in spite of political outrages and national rivalries. Mr Blunt's influence became very great among the Turkish and Christian elements, owing to his principle never to swerve from English rectitude. He was both loved and feared, and did a great deal of good wherever he went, and I do not remember his failing in any case he undertook to set right. On the whole we were happy and comfortable in Philippopolis. Owing to a considerable amount of commercial enterprise with Vienna we could get anything we wanted. Living not being expensive we were able to keep two fine horses and to go about the country around us. On one occasion I profited by my husband's absence to go for a couple of weeks to Aslan, a renowned watering-place about a day's journey from Philippopolis. In its time of prosperity under the Romans it must have been a most lovely resort. Now alas! its numerous mineral baths are roofless and neglected, yet the gushing fountains of healing waters ceaselessly pour into the deep swimming-

baths. These baths reminded me of abandoned orphans in a wilderness, there were none to care for them but a few Turkish peasants from the neighbouring village. I started for this place accompanied by Mr Stoyanovitch, my two blackies, and the faithful Hussein Aga. The road was mountainous and deserted, the country though much neglected was well favoured by nature. Half way on our journey we came to a guard-house half smothered beneath aromatic bushes. Mr Stoyanovitch suggested that we should call a halt and give our horses a rest. No sooner were we dismounted than an armed Albanian appeared, soon followed by six other armed men. They surrounded us, stared at me with their bloodshot eyes, salaamed, and asked Mr Stoyanovitch for some tobacco, which he hastily offered to the chief, who, we noticed, was minus one of his fingers. When Mr Stoyanovitch noticed the defect he became quite white and said to me in French, "For God's sake, get on to your horse as quick as you can." I did so, trying to look as cool and unconcerned as I could, when the bravo minus a finger came towards me and took me by the arm. I thought for a moment he meant to murder me, or worse still to take me as a prisoner, but with a smile on his cruel face he helped me on to my horse. I began to breathe again when that horrid hand was withdrawn. On a signal to his men they fell back, he salaamed again, thanked Mr Stoyanovitch for the tobacco, and signed to us that by his leave we might move on. We walked our horses in silence for a few yards to show confidence or bravery, and then galloped as fast as we could.

After a mile or so we drew rein, and Mr Stoyanovitch coming near to me asked me if I knew the man who had helped me. "That ruffian," said he, "is the most cruel and reckless brigand in the neighbourhood. I thought he was still in prison for the murder of one of our Beys in Philippopolis. The Bey's wife, in order to try and save her husband, bit the brigand's finger so badly that it had to be cut off. He must have bribed the authorities and got out of prison and joined his old band of brigands, or may have formed the new one we have just met. How those ruffians have allowed us to get off scot-free is more than I can say; perhaps it was your youth and bravery that impressed the chief."

"Or rather," said I, "the Albanian superstition regarding the ill-luck that attacks on women bring."

Albanian brigandage was much to the fore in those days, and crimes were committed in all parts of the country with reckless courage and with disdain of Turkish authority. The following tragedy happened subsequent to my husband's transfer to Adrianople.

Seven or eight brigands attacked a caravan of seventy persons bound for Philippopolis some few hours' journey from their destination. Mr and Mrs Merion, two of our American Missionary friends, were among the party. Since the object of the brigands was wholesale robbery regardless of loss of life, pistols and yatagans came at once into use. Half a dozen people who tried a hopeless defence of the party were killed, Mr Merion being amongst the number. In the confusion

that followed, the brigands disappeared with their booty, the survivors of the caravan hurried away as fast as they could, leaving behind Mrs Merion who waited beside the body of her dead husband in a desolate place under a burning sun, waiting for help from Philippopolis. In the present terrible epoch when lives are lost under most tragic conditions this case may fail to inspire the sympathy it deserves for the brave American wife. When help came from Philippopolis she got into the carriage with her husband's remains, and a few hours after reaching home died after giving birth to a little girl. In the absence of any American agency in those parts Mr Blunt received a telegram from the American Legation asking him to attend to the matter and to bring the assassins to justice. It was fortunate that at that time Kibrisly Mehemet Pasha, ex-Grand Vizier, had been sent to Adrianople as Governor-General. Kibrisly was one of the sterling officials in Turkey, well known for his capacity in action and the fulfilment of his duties. As soon as Mr Blunt received the telegram he went to the Governor-General and with him took the steps necessary to secure the arrest and punishment of the brigands. Hearing that the latter were hiding in Philippopolis my husband immediately ordered posthorses to take him there. He declined to take me with him that day, but the next day I received a telegram from him saying that if I still wished to come he authorised me to ask for an escort from the Governor. This looked to me likely to be an exciting adventure, so I sent a note to the secretary of the Governor, a nice man and a

friend of ours, to come and see me. He came at once, but on hearing the message I wanted him to convey to the Governor, namely, that I wanted an escort, he was amazed and said it was impossible for the Governor to let me have one as every trusty man of the police had been sent to hunt for the brigands, so I must give up all idea of my enterprise. Seeing I could get no assistance from that quarter and determined to go if I possibly could, I said half in earnest, half in play, "Kiamil Effendi, since you say His Excellency has no reliable escort to give me I will try to secure one among the Albanian cut-throats, who, once engaged in my service, are sure to prove faithful." I noticed that he did not think I was in earnest, but as soon as he had left I called Hussein Aga and asked him if he could get three of his compatriots as an escort. I added, "I do not wish to know who they are, or where they come from. Provided you guarantee my safety under their care, I will take all the responsibility of their engagement." Hussein's face expanded with joy and he said, "Very well, Effendim," and withdrew. Next morning three villainous-looking Albanians swaggered into the Consulate for orders. One look sufficed to show that though only in the prime of life, each had been through some severe fights. Next day I started under Hussein's and their care. Close to the half-way station I noticed the mutilated body of a traveller in a ditch who had probably lost his life in consequence of the valuable horse he was riding, and which his assassins had carried off. I stopped the night at the Governor's house, where I had an

excellent Turkish dinner, dressed Turkish fashion, which I had to eat with my fingers. Next morning, bearing in mind the horrid sight in the ditch, I asked for one or two policemen to join my escort.

"Turkish policemen," said my Albanians, "are like a set of frightened flies who disappear at the first sign of danger." "No, madam," added the spokesman, "trust to us, we undertake to leave you safe and sound at your destination before the sun sets." Thus assured, I continued my journey and reached the outskirts of Philippopolis before sunset; here my escort drew up at the roadside and salaamed. I asked them why they would go no further, but they said it was best they should leave me there.

Next morning Mr Blunt received a telegram saying the brigands he was seeking had left Philippopolis and were hiding at Adrianople. Shortly afterwards I heard from my husband that the escort which had taken me to Philippopolis was part of the band which had murdered Mr Merion and the others; consequently since Hussein Aga had engaged the escort he must return at once to Adrianople. I confess I felt quite nervous on Hussein's account, but on reflection I felt his part in the matter was only in obedience to my orders, which were in conformity with the notice I had given to Kiamil Effendi of the measures I meant to take, since the Governor could not give me the assistance I needed. I offered to attend at the court, but I heard nothing further of the matter. Owing to the energetic action of both the Governor and Mr Blunt, the whole band was caught and the

murderers punished according to their deserts. As regards my escort, the part they had taken in the business was merely to help the assassins to get out of the country, and for their trouble they got a few years' penal servitude. This illustrates the state of insecurity existing in the country, owing to Turkish neglect and maladministration. Kibrisly Mehemet Pasha's prompt and determined action in the Merion case, at the instigation of my husband, cleared the country roads of brigands for some years, and confined Albanian ravages to the surrounding Christian towns and villages. My husband twice received special thanks from the President of the United States of America for his great services to the American missionaries in Albania.

CHAPTER VII

1862-1864

In a wandering life like ours there was always a certain amount of regret in parting from kind friends we were not likely to meet again, and in leaving behind such *lares* and *penates* as could not be carried away. Such feelings of regret were present with me when my husband and I dismantled our comfortable little home at Philippopolis. I much regretted leaving Bulgaria before I had had the opportunity of completing my collection of lovely old Chinese porcelain. Much of this porcelain had been brought from China *via* India a century and a half previously, for the benefit of the wealthy Dere Beys, whose descendants, reduced to abject poverty, were ready to part with these treasures for a mere trifle. I still have a few pieces left, but one of the finest I possessed I had the honour of presenting to H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh when he visited Salonika.

Philippopolis was rich in Roman antiquities. The wife of the Austrian Consul, a fat old lady who was an expert in antiquities, found many treasures. She drove about the country in a

rickety country cart laden with valuable finds, looking more antiquated in her shabby old dress and coal-scuttle bonnet than many of the things she succeeded in finding. This lady and her husband lived in miserable surroundings, unsuited to the position of an Austrian Consular agent who, if I remember rightly, was the sole foreign representative at the time of my husband's transfer to Adrianople.

Our packing accomplished, we had to decide on the means of transit for our luggage and furniture. My husband suggested that it could go on a raft down the river Tunja, while I thought that something of the nature of a Noah's ark would be better. To this my husband agreed. Thereupon the ark was ordered, and when ready sailed under the care of our Armenian factotum, flying a glorious British flag, which I had made as a protection against Albanian looting parties. The ark started a week before our departure and arrived safe and sound ten days after we had reached Adrianople. But there was no dove to warn us of its safe arrival! The first box I unpacked was a big oblong one in which I had placed my linen with a few muslin wrappers on the top. I had covered these over with a white sack which I had not known contained a little rice. To my amazement, when I opened the box I found, instead of the wrappers I was looking for, a lovely emerald growth of young rice plants, so sweet and fresh looking that I plunged my face into it and enjoyed its fragrant perfume. The rice, evidently favoured by the soft, damp temperature had burst forth, and its rootlets had

found their way through the loose texture of the muslin wrappers.

At the time of my husband's nomination to Adrianople (1862) the place still retained a semblance of its glory as the first capital of Turkey-in-Europe. The celebrated Mosque of Sultan Selim is there. The main part of this imposing building is crowned by an enormous cupola, which almost rivals that of St Sophia at Constantinople, and has four fine minarets, one at each corner, each with three galleries. Some idea of its size and grandeur may be formed from the number of its windows; the thousandth window, by the way, had been left incomplete by the Greek architect, who had been warned that its completion would cost him his life as, had it been finished, it would have brought ill-luck. This beautiful Mosque stands in one of the elevated parts of the Turkish quarter of the town. There was also the Teké, a sacred building of one or two orders of dervishes. It was in these sacred surroundings that one of the important local officials had built a very fine konak, out of the dishonest profits of his administration. The Governor, on discovering the frauds, confiscated the konak and ordered it to be sold by public auction, so that its price might to some extent recoup the State for the monies this man had taken. But this official was a cunning fox, who, in connivance with his friends, arranged that the price of the konak should be kept low and the house be bought by one of them, in order that it might be transferred to him later on. Our friend, the secretary to the Governor, Kiamil

Effendi, on learning of this plot, came to ask us whether we would like him to secure the konak in question for the Consulate. He highly praised it as a bargain and a rare find. We thanked him, and I asked his leave to visit the konak before the purchase was decided on. "That, Effendim," said he, "cannot be done for many reasons, but trust to my taste and you will have no cause for regret." I bowed my tacit consent whilst I considered how I could get to see it. On the principle that "Where there is a will there is a way," I concluded that there was no use in my having studied Turkish manners and customs if I could not transform myself into a perfect Turkish hanoum. I thereupon painted my cheeks, blackened my eyebrows till they met over my nose, cut my nails short and stained them with red ink. I got a well-fitting Turkish lady's costume with veil, cloak, and yellow slippers complete, and thus dressed I defied recognition as an Englishwoman, and with Hussein Aga's wife and an old woman I walked the length of the main street, in considerable trepidation lest I should let drop one of the yellow slippers from off my feet, an act which is a crime in a Turkish lady since it denotes ill-breeding. On reaching the konak without any misadventure the old woman knocked at the door and begged for admission, as the hanoum from the country, pointing to me, desired to visit so fine a konak, the like of which she had never seen. "Buyurun, buyurun" (Welcome, welcome), called out the lady at the top of the stairs. I stepped out of the yellow slippers and went upstairs with all the

dignity I possessed, kissed the hand of the elderly looking lady of the house, salaamed to the younger ones, and looking round the spacious hall we had reached, I puffed out my lips in the most approved Turkish style three times, and said, "Mash Allah, Mash Allah, what a nice fine konak you possess, may Allah give you long life to enjoy it." "Ish Allah, Ish Allah, let us hope so, let us hope so," answered the good lady with a sad smile on her face; "would you like to see the rest of the house?" I gladly accepted her kind offer and went all over the premises, noticing everything with joy and delight, especially the beautiful Turkish bath built in marble. After partaking of a cup of coffee and cigarettes I bid these hanoums good-bye, got once more into the yellow slippers which this time I stumbled in, in my happy agitation over the success of my enterprise. Next day Kiamil Effendi came to tell us that the konak was ours, and that I might go and see it when I liked. "That has already been done, my good friend," said I. He stared at me, and then complimented me on my English energy and *savoir faire*.

Both my husband and I were pleased with our new home, but our neighbours were not so pleased to find a Ghiaour (Infidel) family settled in their midst. Since, however, we both spoke excellent Turkish, and showed due respect to the customs and habits of our neighbours, we soon became good friends and remained such during the seven years we spent in Adrianople. There was a coarse wooden screen outside one of the drawing-room windows which I wished to have removed, as it

blocked out not only air and light but a pretty view over the Imperial Park and Seraglio. This window had been blocked because it overlooked the courtyard of a Turkish house just beneath ours, and without it the ladies of the house could not have made use of their court, as someone from our window *might* have looked down and seen them. I bore the nuisance for a while in the hope of getting rid of it some way or another. Fortune favoured me, subsequent to a visit the Governor paid me. Knowing the right he had to object to the removal of the screen if I directly applied to him I said nothing about it, but as soon as he had left I told Hussein Aga to knock it down with the help of the groom during the night, and should the neighbours make a fuss about it, on the supposition that it was done by order of the Ghiaour Pasha, as Kibrisly Mehemet was called by the Turks, he was to diplomatise with the men and send the women up to me. Matters turned out just as I had expected. The men quickly calmed down, and so did the women when I took them into the drawing-room and showed them a big immovable sofa with a high back which I had had placed across the window, making access to the window impossible unless by climbing over the sofa. The women were so satisfied that no one could approach close enough to the window to overlook their private grounds that I heard nothing more of the matter.

In those days, living in Turkey had many advantages for those who understood the Turks and knew how to deal with them. In Adrianople the Turks were far more liberal and accommodat-

ing than those in Brussa. During all the years we spent there I do not remember any acts of violence or brutality either to the European or Christian residents.

Adrianople was a fairly large town, and extended from the region of the Mosque of Sultan Selim in a straight line to the walled part called the Frank quarter where the Europeans (Greeks, Armenians, French, etc.), lived, and then spread again right and left separating the Turkish from the Christian quarters. The country was fertile and well wooded, and well watered by the fine rivers, the Tunja and the Maritza. Altogether it was a pretty town, well placed and pleasant to live in outside the Frank quarter.

Sultan Selim, whose Mosque dominated the town, had been an enlightened and beneficent ruler. Among other things, he had inaugurated the merciful care of mad persons, for whom he built a fine institution, Timarhané or House of Health, well placed and airy, and had left a set of regulations for the care of such persons far in advance at that time of many countries ahead of Turkey in ordinary civilisation, such, for instance, as to the good feeding, the providing of music, and the outdoor exercise of the inmates.

Soon after we were settled in our lovely house we gave a house-warming to which everybody who was anybody was invited, *i.e.*, the Governor and staff, the members of the Consular Corps, the officers of the Cossack regiment stationed at Adrianople, many from the Frank quarter which included some Greek and Armenian families; but whilst the latter were dressed in their best, the

tout ensemble looked antiquated and far from brilliant. A few of the men had white ties and gloves and knew how to dance. Some of the elderly ladies were very much under the control of their father confessors and did not venture to wear evening dress, whilst the dowager chaperons felt so much out of their element that when some hot *consommé* was handed round shortly before the party broke up, some said, "Merci, mais nous avons pris la soupe chez nous." The young and pretty ones were more at their ease. When I asked the Governor, who had been a long time in England, what he thought of the company he smiled and said, "C'est bon pour remplir nos salons." We were, however, not quite devoid of social stars among the Consular Corps, the Cossack regiment chiefly composed of Polish refugees of high class, and a few others including some English people who had found their way to Adrianople. All these formed an agreeable circle of friends who managed to live happily by getting up plays, concerts, and picnics, hunting with the harriers in the summer, and in winter by organising skating parties. For myself, I never felt more delighted than when I heard from my old friend Mrs Suchodolska that she was coming to live with her father, General Tchaikovsky. We became inseparable friends, and many were the happy times we had together.

Of course, adventures of one kind and another happened from time to time to break the monotony of our lives. Young as I was, experience had already taught me not only to be cool and brave in any sudden emergency, but to try and find out

ways and means to lessen or avert any menacing danger. During one of Mr Blunt's absences from home, when all the servants had gone to a "Festa" at the other end of the town, my sister-in-law, Lucy Blunt, an old Constantinople friend, and I were the only people in the house. About midnight we heard a violent knocking at the gate. I rushed to the window and looked out thinking my husband had returned, but instead I saw a turbaned old Turk who called out, "Effendim, Effendim, your house is on fire on the other side." I rushed to the room opposite which overlooked a yard where brooms were made, hundreds of which were stacked against a wall close to our house. The flames from the broom-yard nearly reached the window I was looking from, and there was a veritable firework display going on from the bits of the brooms which were alight and were blown upwards, and fortunately in a direction from the house, by the strong wind which was fanning the flames. I went down to the old Turk and begged him to keep guard, and only to let in about ten of the neighbours known to him who would help to get the fire under. I then turned on the water in the bath, and collected all the buckets I could find and put them under the various taps to fill. I got a long ladder and placed it against the burning wall. By this time the men had come. I placed several of them on the wall, showed the rest where the buckets and water were, and directed them to fill the buckets and pass them to the men on the wall. Having got this all going I went upstairs and found my sister-in-law and our other guest quite dazed. On learning

what was the matter Lucy became most excited, got a pillow and a pair of slippers, and implored me to leave the house. As for our guest, he quite collapsed; but this perhaps was not to be wondered at as he had experienced a serious fire in his own house when several members of his family and the English governess had all been burned to death. However, he went off for me to General Tchaikovsky Pasha who lived close by, and got him to send some of his Cossacks to help in pulling down the burning part and in extinguishing the fire. The efforts I had made and the help of the men succeeded in saving the house. Curiously enough, my husband could not sleep that night feeling that some calamity was menacing our home. Next morning to his surprise and relief he received a telegram from me telling him of the fire and of our safety.

A few months later a very severe storm with much rain, which ceaselessly poured for several days, caused the rivers to overflow their banks and flooded the low-lying country, so that the houses and cottages in the lower part of the town were completely cut off from communication with the rest of the town. The anxious inhabitants watched for the boats which were employed in bringing bread and other necessaries to them. The sight of the flooded country was so unusual that Mrs Suchodolska and I decided to take a boat and see the Imperial Park which was transformed into an immense lake. It was curious to see the old trees giving shelter to myriads of birds chirruping, hopping about, and fighting for places of safety. The sight was so absorbing that we did not notice

that the current was taking us within the bed of the river, and that the boat was getting beyond the power of the boatman to control it. A sudden call of alarm on his part made us join his call for aid, when, fortunately, a rope was flung to us from another boat which quickly pulled us out of danger and brought us to the gates of the old Seraglio where we landed. A fine flight of marble steps had usually to be negotiated when entering the Seraglio from this side, but now all but the top-most step was under water. We went into the old reception hall which formerly had been a place of much grandeur, where the Sultan's throne, minus its jewelled ornaments, looked like a shade of its former magnificent self, lamenting the glory of times gone by. Opposite the throne stood the curious Imperial cage, solidly railed all round, in which the heirs to the throne used to be placed when receptions were given to Foreign Ambassadors, who used to sit on the then luxuriously covered benches which ran round the walls. The chief beauty of this well-proportioned hall lay in the exquisite old tiles of all kinds and designs, which covered the walls and floor, in which the colours, grave and gay, blended harmoniously. The whole Seraglio had unfortunately been neglected and allowed to fall into decay, and during the last Turko-Russian War the ruins were burned down. There was a graceful tower, approached from one corner of the reception hall, where the Guardian of the place, an old Janissary with many scars on his shrivelled face, denoting his old profession of cut-throat in the glorious days of his youth, lived. According to his statements he

nightly conversed with the ghosts who frequently appeared to him and kept him company. He spoke of the ghosts and their doings with such authority that he almost made us believe that the tales we listened to were of real persons.

One of the last of the Dere Beys who had lived in Adrianople and had had jurisdiction over a vast area, evidently had a keener desire for sanitary reforms than his predecessors, since he viewed with disgust a great mound of decaying manure and refuse which had accumulated during some years in front of his palace. The Dere Bey expressed his dislike of this evil-smelling and fly-accumulating mass in the hearing of one of his attendants who noted his master's complaint. This attendant, a small, thin man, on his own initiative went all over the town and ordered men and boys to assemble with spades, baskets, and carts in front of the palace at a fixed hour that night when he set them to work to remove this immense heap. By the morning the mound had been completely cleared away, and the Dere Bey on leaving his rooms noticed with delight and surprise that the festering heap had disappeared. On inquiring who had accomplished this great feat, the small, lean, delicate-looking attendant salaamed and said, "Effendimiz, I did it to please my Lord and Master."

The Dere Bey gave vent to a burst of incredulous laughter and said, "You! You! In future your name shall be Dagh Deveran" (Remover of Mountains).

A reputation for sagacity and acts of justice soon became associated with Dagh Deveran's name.

People from all parts appealed to his unerring judgment to settle their quarrels till he rose to great distinction and finally occupied his master's position. Among those who came to seek his help in the settlement of a dispute were three Pomak giants from the mountains. When these men were ushered into a large room the only person present was a lean, shrivelled individual who, with crossed legs, sat gathered up in the corner of a sofa. The Pomaks looked all round and asked for Dagh Deveran, the Remover of Mountains.

"I am he," said the little man, drawing a mental comparison between his size and that of the applicants for his judgment.

"You," said the astonished Pomaks, "why you could not remove a bok (a bit of dung), and you enjoy the name of Remover of Mountains!"

"Yes," answered Dagh Deveran, "it was an act of mine that earned me the name, and I have since gained a reputation for levelling human disputes, and now I am ready to listen to yours."

My sister-in-law, Lucy Blunt, stayed with us for some time and was a great addition to our lively set as she was young, pretty, and clever. She was much admired by many people, especially by two extremely pleasant Russian Consuls. One of the Consuls had to leave Adrianople suddenly and was succeeded by the second, who came to Lucy one day and begged permission to tell her that his predecessor had bade him come and ask her on his behalf to marry him. "And now, Mademoiselle," he added, "since I have given you the message with which I was entrusted, I would ask you to marry me." Lucy, however, was

half engaged to a charming old man, a Mr Taylor, Consul at Erzerum, whom she had never seen but whom she knew through her brother George, who was Mr Taylor's assistant; and whom she subsequently married. I do not know that I should have mentioned this family incident had it not been for the realisation of a curious prophecy about her. An old Russian soldier, subsequent to one of the wars between his country and Turkey, had deserted, and had lived for thirty years in a marshy, swampy little island in one of the rivers. Our Cossack friends having discovered this hermit got up a picnic in the vicinity of his abode, and in answer to their whistles he came out of his lair, much like the old Russian bear he looked. He was said to have the gift of clairvoyance. When Lucy heard this she at once extended her hand; the old man looked at it and said, "Vous, Mademoiselle, vous allez vous marier deux fois, vous batterez votre premier mari et vous serez battue par le second."

The prophecy came true. Good old Mr Taylor was like wax in her hands and did all she demanded of him, whilst her second husband, a Russian of high position, was a villain of the first order, and tormented the poor girl nearly to death up to the time he died.

CHAPTER VIII

1865-1871

In 1864 we had a temporary break-up of our home at Adrianople, as Mr Blunt was called to Belgrade, the capital of Serbia, to act as temporary Consul-General while Mr Longworth went on leave. This post was a great advance for my husband, and we gladly undertook the long and tedious journey on horseback over the Babouna Pass, through the Iron Gates of the Danube, by Kezanlik, the world-famed garden of roses and of love, where the Bulgarian youths meet their sweethearts in the spring, and passed the gruesome Tower of human skulls. This tower, which stood on territory recently and temporarily acquired by the Turks close to the Serbian border, served as a lesson and menace to the Serbs, and was for a long time a daily demonstration to the Serbs of the brutality of the Turks. I believe one of Serbia's first acts on her liberation was to pull down that awful tower, for when I passed the same spot some years later all trace of this horrible sight had disappeared. We started on 6th November and our party consisted of my husband and myself, a Russian Consul, who was my husband's colleague, my two little insepar-

able "blackies," who were now young women, our faithful guard, Hussein Aga, and a boy who had been rescued from slavery. The continuous downpour of rain during this, the wet season of the year, and the want of proper roads made it very hard work for the posthorses, as they often had to cross gushing torrents and muddy swamps. However, we reached Sophia, the capital of modern Bulgaria, safely, and were hospitably received by the Hodjabachi or headman of the town. Unlike Philippopolis, Sophia at that time did not look like a progressing populous town, nor did its inhabitants, a good number of whom honoured us with a visit, seem bright or in any way disposed to be influenced by modern ideas.

None of this company of the *élite* who came to lay their grievances before Mr Blunt and the Russian Consul appeared conversant with any foreign language but Turkish, which did not please the Russian Consul, as he would have preferred to talk with them in private, but as it was he had to make use of an interpreter. When the Russian Consul heard me encourage these people with hopes of emancipation from the Turkish yoke he became annoyed and begged me not to foster ideas of rebellion, saying that Russia already did a great deal for Bulgaria and she preferred to do things in her own way, from which later on she reaped nothing but ingratitude and treachery. At that time Bulgarians appeared to have no knowledge of European civilisation or usage for its productions. The only European article I noticed was a baby's feeding-bottle, not in use for the purpose for which it had been designed,

but filled with slevovitzha, a spirit made in Serbia from plums, and passed round to all the guests, who each took two or three sucks at the anything but milk-like contents. When our turn came we refused with thanks.

Extreme surprises often greet one in uncivilised countries. When I was about to retire to bed that night the lady of the house asked me whether I would prefer to have my milk and rosewater bath before going to bed or in the morning. Amazed at the offer of such a luxury I could not help asking her whether Bulgarian ladies were in the habit of indulging in such baths. My hostess in her turn looked greatly surprised and said, "Oh, dear, no! We make better use of our milk by drinking it, by making cheese and yaghourt, one of the best of foods, which makes our men strong and healthy; but some time ago two English ladies stayed with us and both took these baths, so we concluded it must be an English custom; besides, madame," added she, "we are not used to baths and seldom indulge in one, except when we go to the mineral baths now, alas, ruined, which are found all over our country."

At Kezanlik, that pretty, clean, interesting Bulgarian town, noted all over the world for its attar of roses, a comic adventure befel us. Our Russian friend proposed that our entry into this town should be in state, in order that our importance might be impressed on the inhabitants. Calling up the postilion he ordered him to utter his shrillest whistle-call in order to announce the arrival of distinguished travellers. In a few moments all the windows and doors in the main

street were crowded by the inhabitants, anxious to find out who the arrivals could be, a subject of great interest to them owing to the near approach of the great fair that took place each year in the neighbourhood. The fair used to last a week when a vast amount of merchandise exchanged hands, and the variety of people and costumes met there was a sight not to be forgotten. One of the attractions this year was to be a company of tight-rope dancers. Seeing the arrival into the town of strangers in this imposing manner, a loud voice called out gaily,—

"Here comes the company of tight-rope dancers, here comes the famous company, including two black girls in hats." The news spread all down the street with electric-like rapidity, with additional, if not flattering remarks on our personal appearance.

My husband and I were greatly amused; not so the Russian Consul, who was furious at our being mistaken for a group of entertainers, and tried to lash with his whip the surprised and indignant villagers. The postilion, seeing the unpleasant turn the joke was taking, urged his horses to a gallop and saved the situation.

I was not sorry when we sighted the grand Babouna mountain, towering over a small village nestled at its foot, where I hoped we should get a good night's rest. On arriving at the village the owner of a nice-looking house came out and kindly offered us hospitality, which we gratefully accepted. I went upstairs, where a room comfortably carpeted and with a bright fire burning in the grate was put at my service by an exceedingly

pretty young girl, who went by the name of Nivesta (bride), who helped me to take off my wraps and made me comfortable by the fire, when the door opened and Hussein Aga came in in a mysterious manner to tell me that the Bey had given orders that in an hour's time we must all be in readiness to start again. The postilion refused to attempt the narrow pass by night, owing to a recent snowstorm, and Mr Blunt and the Russian Consul coming in, we discussed the matter and decided not to start before the morning. After a good dinner, when Mr Blunt and the others were settled by the fire smoking and talking, I slipped out of the room and went to find the pretty Nivesta, who was not only pretty but bright and intelligent. She wanted to know all about our habits and customs, particularly as regards dress. As we were both much the same size I proposed an exchange of costume to see the effect. Delighted with the suggestion she brought out some of her best clothes and soon transformed me into a Bulgarian Nivesta, while dressed in my tea-gown she became a pretty English girl with her hair hanging down her back. While we were enjoying the fun we heard clapping of hands from the opposite room, and the Russian Consul calling for a basin and jug to wash his hands. I took up the needed things, and with all the modest seriousness I could assume walked up to our Russian friend, while the Nivesta stood near by. The Consul, whilst washing his hands cast a casual look at me, then put his monocle in his eye and began to examine me more attentively, calling out at the

same time to my husband to come up and see a young Bulgarian girl with soft white hands, and with features that could not belong to that race. "What can she be, and from where can she have come," said he. As my husband came up my eyes met his, and we both burst out laughing and revealed the mystery to our astonished friend, who apologised for his mistake. It is quite a remarkable thing what a difference an exchange of clothes can make in a person. The Nivesta in my clothes looked transformed into an English girl, in spite of the fact that she had a slight touch of the racial defects of wide nose, and eyes set wide apart.

We started on our journey next morning, soon to find some difficulty owing to the snow, which got deeper as we approached the dangerous parts of the Babouna Pass. Owing to the drifts of snow, which sometimes reached the horses' girths, we decided to get off our horses and to walk or crawl across the narrow bridge of rocks, precipitous on both sides, over which we had to go. I fixed my riding habit under my arms, put the sleeves of my jacket inside my gloves, and lay flat on the snow and crawled quietly across the dangerous pass. In spite of the discomfort and the danger, I greatly enjoyed the lovely views as I looked down both sides of the pass, on the rich woods and fertile country in its variegated autumn colouring, and on the hills and dales, carpeted with soft emerald growth slightly sprinkled with snow glistening in the sun.

On entering Serbian territory I was struck by

the poor appearance of the small villages which were situated some distance from the frontier. On inquiring the cause of the bareness of the country and of the scarcity of cottages or villages, I was told that the vicinity of neighbours provoked discords and fights, and that that part of Serbia was too near to the Turks to make it wise for Serbs to live there.

I greatly rejoiced when we finally reached Belgrade and were warmly welcomed by my dear sister, Mrs Longworth, who was delighted to see us, as we were to see her, after long years of separation.

The Consulate at Belgrade was large and commodious, and I was delighted with the rooms assigned to us. A small Turkish force was still in occupation of the grand old Fort of Belgrade, whose sole duty appeared to consist in raising and lowering the Turkish flag on its four sides on "festas" as a testimony of Turkey's lingering power in Serbia. After I had been in Belgrade for some time the Pasha in command of the Fort, whose harem consisted of his wife and daughter, the latter a victim to ill-health, which neither prayers, amulets, nor the skill of the family doctor could alleviate, asked me whether I would accompany his wife and daughter to Vienna, so that they might have the benefit of the opinion of the medical specialists there. I accepted at once, glad to be able to be of use to these sweet helpless ladies too terrified to go by themselves. It amused me at the same time to become the chaperon of two nervous Turkish women, perhaps the very first of their nation who had ever visited

a European capital. I soon arranged a costume that disguised their nationality more or less, as well as a costume for myself that looked something like theirs. The family doctor, a handsome Slav, vain of his personality and importance, accompanied us. It was Easter time when we started, and all the people of the country-side appeared to be in gala costume, and to have nothing to do but stop and stare at us as we crossed the Danube to take the steamer direct to Vienna.

The news of the arrival of a party of Turkish ladies had preceded us, and on board we found a crowd of travellers anxious to get a glimpse of so unusual a sight. The Turkish ladies, frightened out of their wits, each took hold of one of my arms, which made it still more difficult for us to pass through the crowd, obliging me to talk to the doctor in two or three familiar languages, and at the same time to keep saying, "Place, mesdames, place, messieurs." Arrived in the cabin, the ladies at once closed the door and turned the key, and stood with their backs to the door for fear of its being opened. The doctor enjoyed the fun, and went on deck full of importance, and gave the impression to the inquisitive travellers that we were a runaway party from the Sultan's Seraglio at Constantinople. Some among the crowd, by conjecture and supposition, turned the supposed incident into a regular romance, and honoured me as the runaway sultana, owing to the assumed importance I had exercised, and discussed my merits and qualities as those of a real sultana. The doctor came

down and induced me to accompany him on deck, where I graciously bowed to the salutes and attentions bestowed on me. I found the farce so amusing that I forgot for a while the responsibility I had undertaken of chaperoning two frightened women, absolutely ignorant of the ways of the world outside their harem.

All the way to Vienna both sides of the Danube presented some of the most delightful scenes I have ever witnessed. Apparently all the population in their picturesque native costumes were enjoying themselves on the banks of the river. On arriving at Vienna we went to "Goldenes Lamm," the best and largest hotel in Vienna at the time. Next day three Viennese medical men came to see the Turkish invalid, with the happy result that they were, after a little while, able to restore her to good health.

It was interesting to see how the nervousness of these ladies in surroundings strange to them was gradually overcome. At first they insisted upon having the door of their sitting-room locked, and I had some trouble to persuade them that there was no need, as no one, unless called up, would venture in; but when I rang for a waiter, and a handsome liveried man came in, they changed their minds and frequently found some excuse to make him come up. This is not surprising as Turkish ladies hardly come in contact with men outside the narrow circle of their own families, consequently a handsome, well-dressed man with deferential, quiet manners is a subject of interest to them.

Opposite to the Consulate at Belgrade was

the palace of Prince Michael Obrenovitch. The Prince was, I believe, the most refined, liberal, and progressive ruler Serbia ever had. Prince Michael had spent a great part of his life in exile, and appeared to have studied all that was best in different capitals of Europe, with the object of making every effort to introduce such of the reforms as he could into his unsettled principality. Unfortunately the rivalries existing from generation to generation between the two ruling families, the Obrenovitch and Kara Georgevitch, not only greatly restricted his power but from the beginning of his reign menaced his life, with the result that he was in constant danger of assassination. Prince Michael's wife, Princess Julia Obrenovitch, *née* Countess Hunyadi of Kethely, was a most charming person who never obtained the popularity she deserved. There were endless intrigues and rivalries among the representatives of the Foreign Powers to gain the confidence of this much-tried princely couple. Unfortunately Michael Obrenovitch was much in advance of his time and too brave and too unwilling to cope with the treacherous dealings of his adversaries.

The Prince and Princess gave most attractive balls that charmed and in part softened the hatred and spite their enemies nourished in their vindictive hearts. The Serbian society, small as it was, was much divided, some people favouring at times one political agent of some great Power, sometimes another, which at times caused a good deal of coolness. I believe the representatives of England, who kept as much as possible out of intrigues, were the most respected. Yet in spite of this, one

of our political agents before Mr Longworth's time was said to have given so much trouble to his Government by constantly threatening to lower his flag, that when his death was announced at the Foreign Office a fervent prayer, "Thank God for the removal of *that* public calamity," was said.

My husband had some trouble, which it fortunately was not necessary to report home, as it was a purely personal affair. While dancing at one of the balls given by the Prince and Princess, he inadvertently stepped on the toes of an officer, who hated the English. My husband apologised at once and then went on dancing. Next morning he received an impertinent letter calling him out to a duel, and later on two friends of the officer presented themselves for the answer. My husband replied that the matter would be referred to the authorities, and thereupon asked an audience of the Prince and stated the case. The Prince apologised for the rudeness of the officer, had him put under arrest, and sent Mr Garachanine, his Prime Minister, officially to Mr Blunt to present his apologies. So ended this storm in a teacup.

The Prince was a great lover of the free constitutional government of England, and tried in every way to introduce into Serbia some of the laws and customs of our country, confidently hoping for England's support in more propitious times. The Princess, sharing her husband's views, undertook a journey to England, where her charm and her cleverness were employed to help Serbia gain England's support with regard to the settle-

ment of her claims with Turkey. The famous pun made by Lord Palmerston, though well known, is worth repeating. The Princess was entering one of the Premier's receptions when her dress caught at the door. "Princesse," said the witty host, coming forward to release her, "la Porte est sur votre chemin pour vous empêcher d'avancer."

It was perhaps fortunate for Michael Obrenovitch, in view of his sad and tragic end, that he had no children. Regardless of dangers, many of which he was warned of, Prince Michael often went about Belgrade without an escort. It was, if I remember rightly, on his return from Paris, where he had gone to visit the Exhibition, that a woman fired at him in church, but fortunately missed him.

On the morning of his assassination he received two anonymous letters warning him not to drive to Topchi Dere, the public park where he often went; but on principle he paid no attention to such letters. As a rule he drove a pair of splendid black horses which had been presented to him by Sultan Medjid as a peace-offering. These horses became his favourites, as besides their beauty they were so perfectly trained that a child could drive them. On that fatal day they seemed conscious of impending danger, for when brought round at the usual hour of the Prince's drive, nothing would induce them to start. They backed, reared, kicked, till the Prince, tired of trying to get them to start, ordered another pair of horses to be brought. Hardly had the carriage entered the park than four men, well-known criminals, fired at the

Prince, and afterwards mutilated his body in order to make sure he was dead.

Prince Michael was truly lamented by his friends in Serbia and elsewhere.

My husband left Belgrade after Mr Longworth's return from leave, but, as I was not strong after a rather serious illness, and my husband's work necessitated his travelling in Macedonia where I could not follow him, I stayed on with my sister and brother-in-law. I watched with great interest the progress the country was making in all directions. Good roads were made, while schools and colleges sprang up in many places.

After a very pleasant prolonged stay in Serbia I began my return journey to Adrianople under the care of Hussein Aga, whom my husband had sent to take me and my black maids home. I had lived so economically while at Belgrade that I had saved enough money to buy a carriage and a pair of Hungarian horses (greys) at Baziash Fair, and since the roads had been greatly improved during Midhat Pasha's short but efficacious rule the journey home was made under very comfortable circumstances. The weather was lovely, the roads safe, and a hamper of good things generously furnished by my sister completed my wants. I greatly enjoyed the scenery from the Babouna Pass, across which I walked and chose a pretty nook amidst wild roses and honeysuckle "to spread my carpet of rest and smoke my pipe of peace." I fell into that train of perfect repose that solitude at times brings to the heart and mind when contemplating the marvellous works of Nature, when Marion, the blacker of the blackies, came to ask

me if I would have lunch. I nodded my head, native fashion, and presently saw her approach with a tray of good things, but missing a piece of excellent Gorgonzola cheese the Italian Consul-General had given me for the journey. I asked her to bring it.

"Yes, mame," said she with a grin, and returned holding a plate with the cheese on it, as far away as her arm would stretch, whilst with averted head she squeezed her stumpy nose with the fingers of her other hand. Absurd as she appeared in the midst of such lovely surroundings, I kept as serious as I could and asked her what she meant by such funny ways.

"Mame," answered she, "cheese grow quick, making walk about plate, p'haps it wants to get to the violets which smell so sweet."

"Take that thing away," I said with indignation, instead she placed it under my nose. So soon as the blackie with the creeping cheese had gone I left off romancing and returned to terrestrial matters, and ate a good lunch.

My next station, if I remember rightly, was Nish, where the Governor invited me to stay the night in his harem in order to show me the improvements introduced into the town by Midhat Pasha. The town looked clean. The Governor was most pleased to take me over a model jail that had recently been built. It was a large square building opening on to a good-sized courtyard, round which were cells adapted for the different classes of prisoners, and included workshops for different trades, where things of all kinds were produced. Beyond the workshops stood the silent

cells in melancholy isolation away from the sound of human voices or the sight of human beings. A hole in the door, which opened from the outside to admit the daily portion of bread and water, was the only communication each prisoner had with the outer world. The Governor ordered three of these doors to be opened. It was a sad sight, since the three prisoners we saw were fine-looking young Albanians, pale and depressed, who cast an indifferent look on us without uttering a word. Evidently since hope was dead in their hearts they disdained even to use the power of speech. I felt more sorry than I can say for the lot of those unfortunate beings, in spite of the justice of their punishment, and it gave me an impression of sadness that will last to the end of my days.

As we came down the steps of this long range of buildings, kept wonderfully clean and tidy for a Turkish Institution, we came to a strong iron door which led to the part where the worst criminals were confined. The door was swung open and I followed the Governor for a few steps with Hussein Aga close by my side, and one or two guards behind us. The place appeared to me to be vast, bare, and dark. As we stood I heard a terrific jangling of chains and the rush of what seemed to me of an innumerable crowd of wild-looking creatures, with heavy iron chains attached from hand to foot on both sides. The crowd hastened towards us and fixed their wild sunken eyes upon us, clamouring to the Governor for their freedom. I felt startled for a moment and tried to back out when the Governor, with his

oriental calm and dignity said, "Korkma, korkma, Effendim! Do not be frightened, do not be frightened, Madame, these are helpless beings now."

Not caring to see any more, I made a sign to Hussein to get me out where I could breathe pure air again. That night, though most kindly received and hospitably entertained in the Governor's locked-up harem, I got but little sleep since the picture of those brutalised creatures was ever present to my mind, and I wondered if by chance they were favoured with freedom, what use they would make of it.

The rest of my journey was uneventful, and I was very glad to reach Adrianople and to find my dear husband in our pretty home, where everything had been kept in perfect order by my good old Bulgarian housekeeper. Our beloved horses "Swift" and "Jack" were alas! no more. For the first few days I felt rather out of my element at having to make a new start in the old life. Except for a few changes in the Consular Corps the social circle at Adrianople was much as we had left it, and appeared to me to be very monotonous; but less so to my husband who had gone heart and soul into Macedonian affairs, and, since he had no assistant in writing his report, I helped him as much as I could.

A change had occurred in our immediate peaceful neighbourhood, which was not favourable. A ruined house on our right had been made into a prison for female (Turkish) prisoners, while on our left a drunken Sheik had married a fine young wife, who, I believe, used to thrash him

daily. One morning as I was dressing I heard a terrific cry of "Fire! fire!" from the Sheik's house. Seizing two jugs full of water I rushed down calling to the servants to follow me. I reached the house by a small door which opened into the garden and witnessed a battle royal between the couple. The Sheik had been knocked down on the floor, while his vigorous young wife sat on his chest beating him with her strong fists while he bellowed like a bull, "Yangen var! Yangen var!" (Fire! fire!) Owing to the disturbance caused by this false alarm I punished both by emptying my jugs on their heads, which quickly put an end to the fray. The girl who had been forced to marry this degraded creature soon afterwards disappeared and nothing more was heard of her.

During the silkworm season the whole population of Adrianople was absorbed in rearing silkworms. This was, when successful, a most lucrative business, but was a great speculation, owing to the prevalence of a disease that killed the worms as they crawled about on the little forest of mulberry bushes made for them by breaking off branches of the trees and sticking them into the ground so that the worms could be watched and cared for. A silly fancy induced me to make a trial in rearing worms, though I had no notion of the food and care they needed. The seed, as the minute grubs are called, was given me by a friend in a tiny bundle of twigs, which I put on one side; but on looking at it the following day I found myriads of microscopic maggots seeking nourishment. I

soon procured leaves from the mulberry tree in the garden, chopped them up on a plate, and shook the maggots over them. Next morning every vestige of leaf had gone and the plate was black with a mass of living moving life seeking space and food. In my ignorance regarding both necessities I went on defrauding my tree of its leaves and spread them on all the tables I could find in order to give space to these rapidly growing mites. The growth of these worms was so rapid that I got into difficulties with regard to space, even after I had secured an outhouse for their special benefit. As week succeeded week they went on eating, sleeping, and developing into beautiful worms when I had a fortunate inspiration, and applied to my drunken neighbour for the key of a disused mosque under his care at the bottom of the narrow passage between our houses. "Mash Allah, Effendim," said he, "all I possess is at your disposal, and you will find your silkworms thrive and grow fat there while elsewhere most of them drop and perish." I thanked him and sent him a couple of bottles of Mastica, and in return received the key. The garden surrounding the mosque proved an ideal resort for my worms, and there I watched my treasures develop and swing their heads right and left as they crawled up the branches of the boughs I broke off for them, in search of the precious leaves on which to weave their lovely silk cocoons, ready for their change before entering the happy state of a love-stricken butterfly in search of her mate, with whom she could live, love, and die. My mosque-reared family was

the only one that prospered and outlived the epidemic that killed those I had in the other places. After defraying all expenses I had a balance of £50 in my pocket, but interesting as this enterprise had been I was never tempted to renew it.

CHAPTER IX

1872-1876

In 1872 my husband was appointed to be Her Majesty's Consul at Monastir (Bitholia of my earlier days). The appointment was a great blow to me as it meant a return to the wilds of Macedonia, to be cut off once more from the civilised world and left in that dull town which had been further impoverished by the withdrawal of the Turkish Army. The music, wild and soft, of the band of the Turkish Army had been not unpleasing to listen to during the time I spent at Monastir before my marriage, and when "God save the Queen" and other foreign national anthems were played, they often touched the hearts and brought tears to the eyes of those who, like ourselves, were away from home.

The very thought of this removal was enough to crush all hope of a pleasant life; still I tried my best to look contented for my husband's sake and for the sake of my baby boy, whose presence in our home was like a ray of sunshine. We sold most of our furniture owing to the difficulties of carriage along bad roads and across broken bridges, with which the way to Monastir abounded.

My husband preceded me and the boy, in order

to secure a decent abode and prepare it as best he could for us on our arrival. My child, who was now a year and a half old, necessitated my taking the journey *via* Salonika in a talika, a springless, uncomfortable vehicle which I often had to get out of and walk. I stayed only one day at Salonika, heartily wishing we could have stopped there for good. Nearing Vodena a terrific storm overtook us, barely allowing time to cross the flooded torrent tearing down from the heights above, while the talika was flooded as high as the seat, obliging me to hold the child up to my shoulders. The ascent up the hill was equally difficult and dangerous. I fortunately got out and walked to the top of the hill, the rain pouring down, and sat on a great boulder with my baby in my arms waiting for the talika, when to my horror I saw it rolling down the precipice with the horses and groom. Providentially it came to a stop against some projecting rocks; but it took over an hour to get it up, and during the whole time I sat on the boulder with my baby pressed against my heart, the picture of despair. The rain did not cease to pour down, the thunder crashed overhead, and sheets of forked lightning crossed one another in a magnificent display over the hills and the valley below. I never remember so terrific a storm or so beautiful and angry a mood of Nature. Had there been an artist to paint the whole tableau with me and the child as a group of despair in the centre of these wild surroundings, it would have made a striking picture. Fortunately the storm gradually subsided and we were able to get to a miserable hostelry

before it grew dark, where I spent the night in a kind of barn open on all sides. Next day we reached Monastir, where in the twilight I could see the impoverished look the town had assumed on the main street. Most of the once fine houses were bereft of occupants and going to decay; the shops were almost bare, goods being no longer needed; while the natives looked more wretched and miserable than before. My husband had secured, as the Consulate, the best of the deserted old konaks. Choosing the smallest of its rooms we settled down, leaving the rest of the big edifice to the rats and mice to gambol about in, in freedom and security. Disheartened as both my husband and I felt, Providence once more came to our aid by the unexpected arrival of Colonel Synge, a most charming man and delightful companion. We at once got him to come and share our unsettled home *à la guerre comme à la guerre.* Sport was Colonel Synge's chief object in coming to Monastir, and both he and my husband thoroughly enjoyed this to their hearts' content. I naturally took no part in their expeditions after big game, but stayed at home in order to try and give a semblance of comfort and respectability to the Consulate, for which I had neither the energy nor the means to do more than was absolutely necessary. The task was difficult, but had to be done, as no official in Turkey could possibly acquire influence, or secure the confidence and esteem of the authorities or the inhabitants unless he put his Consulate on more or less a proper footing. I believe this all-important question of living in adequate style never attracted the serious

attention of the Foreign Office, whose chief object seems always to have been to keep the salaries of the junior officials in the Consular Corps at a minimum, obliging them either to get into debt in order to set their consulates on a proper footing, or else to live like "Zingari" or gypsies, as the natives are in the habit of calling them, and whom in consequence they do not regard as the representatives of a Great Power. I consider it is better not to nominate Consular agents than to expose them and their Government to unavoidable humiliation. The great influence my husband enjoyed during his long term of service in Turkey, and the good he did was in part due, not only to his personality, but to his continuous efforts to keep up the Consulate in proper style.

On our arrival at Monastir political ferment had already begun, and many were the evils my husband was able to modify by his influence and the pressure he brought to bear on the tactless Governor, who neither knew nor was competent to deal with the just claims of the people, Christians or Turks.

We had only been a few months in Monastir, and I had not got to the end of hanging up curtains, when as I was sitting on the top of a ladder fixing some draperies, my husband rushed into the room with an open despatch in his hand, saying, "The Consulate of Monastir is suppressed and I am appointed Consul at Salonika." I nearly dropped off the ladder with joy and ran to give Colonel Synge the welcome news. He was equally glad to hear it, and reminded me that he had told me more than once that I need not trouble to do

too much to the house as he was certain we should be transferred to Salonika. We were all three delighted, the Colonel particularly so, as he had bought a nice property not far from Salonika as a hunting-box to retire to when he was tired of the formalities of civilised life.

Before leaving Monastir I visited many of my old haunts in memory of the good time I had spent there with my sister and her husband, Mr and Mrs Longworth. There were also a few acquaintances to call on, including the fat old Dervish Pasha, who was not only the politest of polite Turks, but a clever and amusing old hypocrite. One afternoon as I was driving home, and just as the carriage passed the door of the konak where Dervish Pasha lived, a wild-looking "Perishan" (religious lunatic), with hair and beard innocent of brush and comb, rushed out of the gate, and with one bound jumped into my carriage and sat at my side, staring at me with his bloodshot eyes and murmuring words I could not hear. Frightened and horrified to feel myself at the mercy of this demented beast I tried to get out, when he took hold of my arm and held it as if in a vice, while Hussein did his best to throw the man out of the carriage. Dervish Pasha witnessed all that was going on under his window, and, to my disgust, told me not to mind, as the Perishan was a very holy man whose touch was sure to bring me good luck. These pretended holy madmen, highly venerated at that time by the Turks, were a terrible nuisance to people in the streets on account of their disorderly looks and deeds, and yet none of them were ever proceeded against. I have not seen the face of a Perishan for years,

but I cannot forget this last sample without a shiver of disgust. It would not be surprising if the Kaiser in a freak of religious zeal may not wish to join the Perishan order, thereby trying to revive his departing influence on the unfortunate Turkish nation he has brought to ruin.

Among Turkey's shattered dominion it is difficult to predict what the destiny of Macedonia will be, with her mixture of nations, a regular *Salade Macedoine.* Every one of the races will wish to get a bit. It reminds me of the representative of a certain Power who came to me and asked me to write an article on his countrymen living in Macedonia. I asked him where these fellow countrymen were to be found. "Mais voila! Madame, c'est qu'il faut les créer là ou ils ne se trouvent pas, et pour cette belle œuvre je vous promets de la part de mon Gouvernement, une décoration et une somme d'argent." I expressed my regret, saying that creations of the kind were so entirely out of my power that I should have to forego the promised decoration and payment.

I was again obliged to travel without my husband as my child became very ill, and I desired to start at once for Salonika to place him under the care of a good doctor there. We again had a miraculous escape that might have cost us our lives. A bridge over a deep ravine suddenly fell. On our previous journey the condition of the bridge was so bad that my men had to pull up several planks of the bridge and put them together to make a safe road for the talika. This time, though it was getting dark, I noticed a big cloud which I took for

the smoke from a fire of bushes in the vicinity of the bridge. The horses trotted close up to the bridge when a man rushed out and stopped them. At first I took him for a brigand, when he pointed to the supposed smoke and said, "Look, the bridge has just fallen." In another minute, had it not been for this warning, our horses might have fallen down the ravine. This poor man richly deserved the present he got, not only for averting from us a great calamity, but for taking us some distance round where the ravine was fordable. Such were the adventures that travellers had to face in the Turkish Empire in those days.

On arriving at Salonika I was hospitably received by Mr and Mrs Crosbie, very kind Scottish friends. Mr Crosbie, a missionary who had come to Salonika to try and convert the Jews, was a very well-known character and a most kind host and friend to all the clergy who came to Salonika. My son soon recovered under the care of a good doctor and my good fortune went further, for the second day of my arrival I secured one of the best and prettiest houses in the centre of the town, which had been occupied by a dear old Russian Consul who, on hearing that I wanted a nice house, at once came and offered me his Consulate, saying that it was best we should have it rather than a solitary old man like himself.

As soon as my faithful blackies and the luggage arrived I set up house for the tenth time, always under difficulties but rewarded by success. There is nothing like experience to

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develop one's capacities under the pressure of necessity. My husband, well pleased with our new home, and leaving the cares of the house to me, started making acquaintance with the town, the people, the authorities, and his numerous colleagues. He instituted a club, the Cercle des Étrangers, of which he remained the active President for over twenty years. (The club was burnt down in the great fire of 1917.)

Salonika (Thessalonica, as the old Greeks called it) at the time we went to it had nothing new like so many other towns of Macedonia. The old walls surrounding the town were crumbling, and there were gaps in all directions, but the two arched gateways, one at each end of the Strada Via or principal main street had been marvellously retained. To the discomfort of the inhabitants, these gates were closed every night at sunset; an absurd measure of security kept up by the authorities for the trifling revenue it brought. In the Frank quarter, where the Christians lived, the houses were built of wood and were neither elegant nor comfortable. The Jewish quarter consisted of a number of abominable, poverty-stricken, filthy hovels of which the sight and smells were so repulsive that the only time I went round it with one of the Sisters of Charity of the Roman Catholic Convent, I determined never again to set foot in it. I need hardly say that the system of ghettos did not exist in Turkey, consequently all the well-to-do Jewish families could build and rent houses in any part of the town they pleased. The Turkish quarter as usual was airy and clean, but, barring the

Strada Via and one or two other streets, the streets were narrow, ill-paved, and unlit. There were only one or two carriages in the town belonging to private families, and a few Tahtervans (a sort of palanquin) for the special benefit of Turkish brides who were conveyed in them to their new homes. The rest of us, when we went out at night, had to walk with men ahead of us carrying not only lanterns but our shoes, which we had to change on arriving at the house where the dinner or soirée was being given. There was no municipality to look after the needs of the town, so that no attention was paid to cleanliness nor to the epidemic diseases which frequently visited it. All refuse was cast outside the gates, where it formed dirty, evil-smelling, disreputable looking heaps. There was neither pier nor landing-stage of any kind. Salonika was very picturesquely situated on the shores of the splendid bay of that name with the Hortiach Mountain behind it, and the glorious Mount Olympus mirrored in the blue waters of the bay.

The town possessed a bazaar where lovely articles of every description could be got for a trifle. Shops were scattered all over the town, and unlike Malta, every industry for supplying the needs of the people was carried on by the natives. Carpets, all kinds of wool and linen tissues, and beautiful articles in wood, copper, and silver, and other metals were made, some of them quite works of art. Life in Salonika at that time, if not luxurious, was easy going and inexpensive. Turkeys cost 10d. to 1s. each,

partridges 10d. a brace, eggs 4d. a dozen, fish, milk, fruit, and vegetables were all plentiful, good, and cheap. European articles of luxury or even of necessity were not yet in use, except in the houses of a few wealthy families who had imported them by special order.

On the whole Salonika came next to Smyrna with a promise of a fair future, at least such were my impressions of the place. When I came to know it better, the things I could never endure were the filthy state of the streets and the untidy, ill-kept shops; but in the East one has to endure many things one does not like.

It did not take my husband long to master the situation, nor did he fail in his untiring efforts to improve, as far as it lay in his power, the spirit of unrest and discontent prevalent in the place on our arrival. His tour in Macedonia, Thessaly, Albania, and the Epirus were beacons of light that continued to render him good service in his work, as every place he had visited enabled him to learn much, and to secure the services of trusty agents who continued to the last hour of his office in Turkey to keep him perfectly well informed on all that went on in those unsettled countries, beginning to ask for changes and improvements which were tardy to come.

CHAPTER X

1876

THREE events of great interest to us happened in 1876, the first two, namely, my husband's transfer to Monastir and then to Salonika were of private interest, the third, the massacre of the consuls at Salonika, was a tragedy in which many people were involved.

The ferment of discontent in Salonika was very great but was not too readily seen. It reminded me of a deep, fast-running river, calm on the surface till a point was reached where the waters were agitated, when bubbles of discontent and dissension arose, and of a sudden the aspect of calm disappeared.

My husband minimised the importance of the various rumours which abounded and, though new to Salonika, tried with his tactful *savoir faire* to put off the evil day of a massacre of the Christians by the Turks, when suddenly a matter, small in itself, gave rise to the murder of two innocent men, M. Moulin, the French Consul, and his brother-in-law, Mr Henry Abbott, the German Consul. A peasant girl of the Orthodox Church from a village in the interior had a Mohammedan lover, and in order to be able to marry him

decided to accept the Islamic faith, and came to Salonika to take her vows in her new religion. By chance this girl met her mother in the train on her way to Salonika, when there was a battle royal between them. The mother lost all hope of retaining her daughter in the Orthodox faith, and telegraphed from one of the stations at which the train stopped to her Greek friends in Salonika, begging them to rescue her daughter on the arrival of the train. It happened that it was the Feast of St George, a general holiday, and all the Greek population, probably having nothing better to do, collected round the railway station, and on the arrival of the train got hold of the girl and threw her into the carriage of Mr Lazaros, a Greek gentleman who was the American Consul. The coachman was ordered to take the girl to the Metropolis (the Archbishop's palace) but took her instead to the American Consulate. As Mr Lazaros was not at the Consulate the girl was taken to a house in the Greek quarter.

That evening a meeting of Greeks was held, when it was decided not to hand the girl over to the Turkish authorities, as it was hoped in this way to prevent her making her declaration as a Moslem.

Now Mr Henry Abbott, the German Consul, and his sister who had married M. Moulin, the French Consul, though half Greek were British subjects, and Mr Abbott and M. and Madame Moulin all appear to have greatly favoured the detention of the girl.

The Turks also held a meeting and determined to get hold of the girl and so the fight began.

It might be added that it was because the girl was thought to be under age, and therefore still under the jurisdiction of her parents, that all the trouble arose. Later on, when the girl was seen in Court, and at Mr Blunt's request and with the support of the Kadi or Supreme Judge and the Archbishop, she was asked to put off her veil, she was seen to be a woman of two or three and twenty, and of course perfectly free to follow what faith she desired. But "how great a matter a little fire kindleth." This incident of the peasant girl was the spark that set ablaze a conflagration which had been smouldering for a long time.

The day after the girl's arrival in Salonika, when she was in the hands of the Greek community, Mr Blunt, attaching no importance to the affair, left the Consulate early in the afternoon without stating where he was going. In his absence matters began to be serious. On the reiterated refusal of the Greeks to hand the girl over to the Moslems, a body of fanatical Turks, armed with all kinds of implements, poured down the main street and took up their positions with their backs to the wall, awaiting instructions, whilst the Muezzins on the minarets called the faithful to protect Islamism.

I went on to the balcony overlooking the Consulate gate and saw the French and German Consuls, M. Moulin and his brother-in-law, Mr Henry Abbott, with their kavasses (guards) go up the street in the direction of the Government House, which was just opposite the Mosque and the telegraph office. The Governor and the Mejlis (Council) and a great number of the

populace were gathered together in the Mosque. Whether M. Moulin and Mr Abbott went into the Mosque or were forced into it remains a mystery, but their presence there was revealed by a few lines Mr Abbott wrote to his brother, Mr Alfred Abbott, saying, "We are kept prisoners here. You had better send the girl to the authorities as this is our only chance." I cannot say how long it was after the receipt of this note that Mr Alfred Abbott came to find my husband, who had not yet returned. About the same time Hussein Aga came to inform me that the two Consuls were held captives in the Mosque, and that if the girl was not handed to the Turkish authorities within two hours they would be murdered. At the appointed time I heard pistol shots, and there was a considerable movement among the Turks in the street.

A Jewish gentleman, Mr Allatini, a man of great influence whose office was in the Consulate courtyard, ordered the Consulate gates to be closed, whereupon in my husband's absence I wrote and asked him to have them reopened, and to allow people seeking protection under the British Flag to come in. It was a risky thing to do, but I felt that the town, and indeed all of us, were passing through a great crisis which demanded coolness and presence of mind. Hussein reported to me that the Consuls had been murdered, and that the excited Turks were leaving the Mosque and going to the Greek quarter to begin the massacre from the house of Mr Lazaros. I thereupon decided to send my little boy to Mr Allatini's house where I felt he would be safe,

while I remained at the Consulate to await events with my faithful guard, Hussein Aga.

Shortly afterwards my husband came in, surprised and horrified to hear what had taken place. He immediately sent a peremptory note to Mr Alfred Abbott, since he was a British subject, ordering him to hand over the girl to Hussein Aga and a small body of police at once. He was about to go out to the rescue of his colleagues, if perchance they were still alive, when I called to him from the balcony not to do so, or at least to put on his Consular cap in order that he might be recognised. But to no avail; he just called out, "I shall be all right," and walked off in the direction of the Mosque. Although a comparatively newcomer some of the armed Turks recognised him and begged him not to venture into the Mosque, as they were sure he would be murdered like his colleagues. His reply to them had a good effect as a number of them offered to, and did, accompany him to the Mosque. He found the Pasha and all his Mejlis (Council) coming out of the Mosque terror-stricken and horrified at the recent tragedy. They in a body opposed Mr Blunt's entrance since the colleagues he wished to assist were past all help. The Pasha himself, shaking from head to foot, begged my husband to accompany him to his konak. My husband consented to do so on condition that he should be admitted to the privacy of the harem, where he thought he might find quiet and security to think over the measures to be taken for the safety of the town. Before going into the konak he went into the telegraph

office and sent a message to Athens for one or two men-of-war to be sent at once, and wrote me a note saying he was safe.

On entering the harem he was met by a crowd of screaming women, terrified at the sight of a strange man. Some covered their faces, others tried to run away, but the Pasha coming in gathered them like a flock of frightened sheep and swept them into the inner rooms.

During this time Hussein Aga and the police had found the young woman and were taking her to the authorities when, providentially, they met the murderous Moslems on their way to the house of Mr Lazaros to commence the massacre of the Greeks. At first, disbelieving the personality of the girl, they fired at Hussein, when one of the band recognised her and got the crowd to acknowledge her, and took her to the Governor's konak, where my husband was laying before the Pasha and his Council the gravity of the consequences should they fail to take immediate steps to prevent further mischief when once the girl was in their hands. Coming to their senses they, like frightened schoolboys, begged for instructions.

In the interval, Madame Moulin and her brother, Mr Alfred Abbott, heard of the murder of M. Moulin and Mr Henry Abbott and were frantic with fear and sorrow; the former, in an attack of hysteria, threatened to throw herself out of the window unless the body of her husband was brought home. I went to try and comfort Madame Moulin. On my way to the French Consulate I came face to face with a party of the murderers who were besmeared with blood.

I continued to walk on, apparently calm and cool, when one of the wild brutes about three feet from me cocked his pistol and pointed it at me. I stopped and gave him a look of defiance such as I suppose real danger and terror inspires. The man lowered his pistol and murmured some words which I failed to understand. I found it best to bring Madame Moulin to our Consulate. A few minutes later my husband came in, when Madame Moulin again lost all self-control and called out wildly for revenge, and insisted that the body of her husband should be brought to her. After an hour or so Madame Moulin wished to go back to her own house whither I accompanied her, and spent the night watching her with my ears alert for noises in the street in dread of an attack.

The next morning on leaving the French Consulate I slipped into Mr Allatini's house to see my dear boy before returning to the British Consulate. I noticed there was a good deal of agitation prevalent in the streets. The Turks looked savage and discontented, the Christians meek and frightened, whilst some of the foreign consuls who had ventured out were insulted by the populace. My husband, brave and fearless as usual, had not returned from the inspection he had made during the night in the dark, and quite alone, of the Turkish quarter. He walked down every street to make sure that the Governor's promise to have each street guarded by soldiers to prevent further trouble was fulfilled. On returning to the Consulate my husband saw a dense crowd near the gates, which suggested a fresh attempt at massacre. He pushed his way into the centre of the crowd

only to find a donkey, heavily laden with wood, which had fallen down and lay stretched across the street barring the way. He scattered the crowd and walked into the Consulate where all the British subjects, in a very nervous condition, awaited his return for instructions as to the measures they might take to prevent further trouble. My husband took them all on to the balcony and pointed out to them the guns of H.M.S. *Swiftsure* pointing right on the Turkish quarter, and at the same time told them of the scare caused by the fall of a donkey, and so ridiculed their fright that they, though shamefaced, felt comforted and hastened home to assure their womenkind that all danger was over.

During the evening the body of M. Moulin was brought to the French Consulate by the French monks, and as Madame Moulin persisted in her desire to see her husband's remains I got the doctor of the French *Stationnaire*, which had arrived from Athens, to make the poor body presentable after its terrible mutilation in the Mosque. Poor Madame Moulin calmed down very much after seeing her husband's body and became resigned to the inevitable. I was much struck with Madame Moulin's sorrow, which so absorbed her that she never expressed one word of thanks to me or to a few others who had risked their lives to help her in her hour of need.

During all this critical time I hardly saw anything of my husband, who appeared to be everywhere except at home. I felt proud of the confidence he had placed in my *savoir faire*, and took courage and decided to face the agitated

crowds in the streets and go and see my good friend, Mrs Henry Abbott, who lived at the other end of the town. Mr Henry Abbott's mangled body had been taken to his home and there I found his widowed mother calm and resigned, like a Grecian mother of olden times, accepting the decrees of Nemesis. Her daughter-in-law, Mrs Henry Abbott, one of my dearest friends, a highly accomplished and gifted young girl and a member of the Caratheodori family was sitting by her side in accordance with Greek custom. Overpowered with her grief she fell into my arms like a wounded bird. Filled with pity and sorrow for her I did my best to comfort her. The body of her husband and that of M. Moulin were taken respectively to the Greek Metropolis and the Roman Catholic Church to receive the last sacred rights of the Requiem.

Both Mrs Abbott and Mrs Henry Abbott received large indemnities from the Turkish Government and soon left Salonika never to return there. Mrs Henry Abbott made England her home, where she settled down with one of her sisters, and where, perhaps, I may meet her some day.

The presence of H.M.S. *Swiftsure* moored in front of the Turkish quarters, her guns in readiness to fire if needed, soon brought the quarrel to a close, while the Turkish authorities in order to make a show of activity made some arrests in their endeavour to calm down the irritation and anger of the Islamic population.

Most of the foreign embassies sent representatives to Salonika, while my husband, with

the support of Sir Henry Elliot, stood his ground firmly and settled this complicated quarrel without the occupation of foreign Powers which some desired to impose on the town. The degradation of the Pasha and his imprisonment with a few others connected with the case, and the death penalty paid by some of the supposed or real murderers was all that appeared to be necessary. One of the murderers, a gigantic nigger, who a few months previously on our arrival had carried some of our heaviest luggage on his back, was one of those who were hanged. His wife stood by at the time and, putting her hands on her breast as a sign of contentment, said, "Och olsoun" (Serves you right).

So ended this tragic massacre of the Consuls. Several people, both Christians and Turks, testified to the fact that it was due to my husband's tact and energetic measures that Salonika was saved from a more general massacre.

CHAPTER XI

1876

Soon after the funeral of the consuls all the foreign ships, with the exception of H.M.S. *Swiftsure*, under the command of Captain Baird, left Salonika. The presence of the *Swiftsure* was most welcome to us after all we had gone through, and my husband took the opportunity of impressing upon the Turkish authorities the serious responsibility that rested on their shoulders with regard to the welcome and safety of the men of all ranks of our men-of-war whilst at Salonika. My husband was so successful in having the measures he imposed upon the Turkish authorities fully and faithfully carried out, that during his twenty-five years' residence in Macedonia nothing of an unpleasant character ever happened to an Englishman, though shooting parties into the interior and the free access of the liberty men to the town were of daily occurrence; and this, in spite of the fact that the spirit of hatred between Moslems and Christians was never modified; that the Balkan States—Albania, Macedonia, Thessaly, and Epirus —were all in a state of ferment; that the agency of the Komitadjis or armed marauding bands, Bashi-Bazouks, the Andarti (Greek freebooters

living on their casual earnings), and Greek brigands were all ready to fight all and sundry; yet, thanks to my husband's influence, Englishmen of all ranks, except in two instances, were safe to come and go as they liked. Among the Greek brigands was a man named Nico, well known for his savage cruelty. He would commit a murder or two in a town or village and carry off boys of tender age, and then barter the noses and ears of his victims for cash with the helpless parents; or he would send the heads of the boys to the horrified relations in cases where the stated amount was not forthcoming. It was in 1880 that our dear old friend Colonel Synge, while staying at his country house at Tricovista, had the misfortune to fall into the hands of this monster. In the dead of night Nico penetrated into Colonel Synge's room, dragged him out of bed, and carried him off to the inaccessible fastnesses of Mount Olympus. This was a terrible blow to us both, but especially to my husband upon whom rested the responsibility of Colonel Synge's release. On the second or third day an ultimatum addressed to my husband arrived from Nico claiming £12,000 as the price of Colonel Synge's head. The Government took the case up and after weeks of parleying the amount was reduced to £8000. Our poor friend during this time went through great suffering and privation, to say nothing of the feeling of horror of finding himself the victim of a band of assassins. H.M.S. *Condor* was at once sent to Salonika from Constantinople, and greatly facilitated my husband's journeys across the bay to Catarina in his efforts to come to an understanding with the unscrupulous Nico who held poor Colonel

Synge's life entirely within his power. It was a day of great rejoicing to us when the *Condor* brought Colonel Synge to the Consulate, though he, poor man, was reduced to a skeleton and looked more dead than alive.

Salonika was daily becoming more and more important, rendering Mr Blunt's work over the vast area under his jurisdiction more difficult of control. The timely appointment of Mr Alvarez as Consulate Assistant was a great relief to my husband, and at the same time it afforded both of us great satisfaction to have a countryman of our own in the midst of the foreign element with which we were surrounded. Mr Alvarez was the first of the Consular assistants appointed to the Salonika Consulate who served under my husband before becoming a Vice-Consul, and he, and those who followed him, have distinguished themselves in the Consular Service. Mr and Mrs Alvarez, who are now settled in Malta, are the oldest and dearest friends I have connected with the Service, and are a source of great comfort to me as the last link of the old happy days at Salonika. Those were indeed happy days, even at their worst, when my husband on returning from a journey in the interior fell ill, and for weeks hovered between life and death. Even at this distance of time my mind often reverts with deep gratitude towards Salonika and its inhabitants for the interest and sympathy they showed in his case. All the clerical heads of the communities, bishops, priests, hodjas had special services, and asked leave to be allowed to come and pray at his bedside or breathe over his head. The monks of

Mount Athos sent a special deputation from all the monasteries and gave prayers for his speedy recovery. The Turkish Government Department sent me two stones of great medicinal value which had been in its possession from the time of the Conquest. These stones were given into my hands on loan as a precious remedy for his case, and I was asked to give a receipt for them. The strange-looking objects entrusted to my care were very hard greenish stones of the size of a small walnut, and were to be applied where the pain and danger were most severe. When I applied one on the head it caught and stuck there as if drawn by some invisible electric force. The same thing happened with the one I placed on his body. During the night a change for the better began to show by the abating of the delirium and by one of his drawn-up legs stretching into a normal position. Next morning I was overjoyed when three or four doctors, who had come to perform a serious operation, said there was no need to operate since his life appeared to be out of danger. This opinion of the doctors gave me a certain amount of faith in the efficacy of the stones, especially as I tried them on my own person and on several others, and found they would neither catch nor stick even when damped, whilst reapplied to my husband they caught on and held like a limpet on a rock. These wonderful stones are found at rare intervals in the veins of a donkey's neck, perhaps only one stone may be found in a million donkeys. Is it possible that these stones may be the petrified serum which benefits such cases of disease as Mr Blunt was suffering from?

As soon as my husband had recovered and was sufficiently strong to travel, we went to Constantinople to stay with my dear brother and his wife, Sir Alfred and Lady Sandison. My brother's kiosk was placed on the top of the hill at Therapia, facing the Bosphorus towards the entrance to the Black Sea. The sweet reviving air and the lovely surroundings soon restored us both to our normal condition of health, and enabled us better to enjoy the family gathering which included my adored old mother, my dear sister Matilda and her husband, Mr Ricketts, and my cousin, Sir Edward Zohrab, and his charming wife. It was a most delightful party, and after so many years of separation we all had most interesting adventures to relate of the places we had been to, and the people we had met. The Ricketts had wonderful things to tell of their life in the Caucasus, where Mr Ricketts had been Consul until the fashion of murdering consuls had reached that wild place disturbed by political agitation. Prince Karaja, who represented the interests of Turkey, and his wife were cruelly murdered whilst at dinner, and Mr Ricketts had good reason to suspect that his turn was to come next, as a certain Great Power had notified its objection to Turkish and British agents in that quarter.

My cousin Sir Edward Zohrab's stories of his experiences in the Khedival Court from the time of the first Khedive of Egypt were exciting enough to form a fine romance. One of his experiences was when he played a great rôle in the rescue of the Khedival harem at the

time of Arabi Pasha's rebellion. It will be remembered how Arabi suddenly surprised Alexandria with a force of some 10,000 men. The Khedive was practically isolated in his palace, and fearing an attack by the rebels, and being anxious for the safety of his harem he entrusted the latter to the care of my cousin who was attached to the Khedival house. Edward managed to convey the precious inmates of the harem from the Abdin Palace to a palace outside the town. He had to take many carriage loads of veiled ladies through crowded streets held by Arabi's adherents, while the arch-rebel, instead of directing affairs himself as one would have supposed he would have done, obeyed my cousin's orders and rode ahead of the procession of carriages, whilst Edward, revolver in hand, warned Arabi that at the first sign of disturbance on his or his adherents' part he could consider himself a dead man. The menace having succeeded to perfection, Edward placed the innumerable princesses, kadin effendis, and hanoums in safety, and then, without any credentials, boarded the *Condor* and begged that a body of sailors might be landed. Edward's appearance in no way harmonised with the importance of his mission, and when watching the faces of the officers he despaired of success, as they appeared to doubt the truthfulness of his story. However, his candid face and his evident anxiety to obtain help carried the day, and a party of bluejackets was landed. This small force and the clever management of the *Condor* by its gallant captain, Lord Charles

Beresford, saved Alexandria; and later on the same ship and same captain earned the praise of "Well done, *Condor*," at Fort Mex, thus immortalising the name of the ship and that of its captain which has become identified with the best interests of the Navy. I think this well-known incident is worth repeating, if only to show the utter incapacity of the oriental mind to organise any undertaking properly, and how the *savoir faire* of a few young Englishmen enabled the whole rebellion to be cut short.

Mr Ricketts, Edward Zohrab, and my brother, with his great knowledge of the Turks and his talent in telling a good story, formed a trio well worth listening to on the mysterious political, racial, and religious workings in the Near East. Everything, alas! in these countries is worked like wheels within wheels, crushing what is worth developing and developing what ought to be crushed.

I had to stop at the Dardanelles for two days on my return from Constantinople in order to wait for the steamer to take me to Salonika.

By good luck I came across Dr Schliemann, the great explorer of Troy, who kindly asked me and my two friends to visit his excavations. We gladly accepted so unexpected and valuable a treat. We first had a short journey by sea and then a delightful ride on horseback across fertile country which rose gently towards the famous old city. Dotted here and there were picturesque ruins interspersed with modern Turkish defensive works. We reached Dr Schliemann's home, perched high like an eagle's nest on a mount of

some considerable height, just as the glorious rays of the setting sun lit up the prehistoric remains of Troy. My enthusiasm grew in proportion to the beauty of the scene, and our gallant host welcomed us in poetic style and honoured each of us with the title of one of his favourite goddesses or queens. I was supposed to impersonate Diana, the huntress, while he represented Homer, and loaded me with flattering eulogies from the *Iliad* which he quoted with a strong German accent. My feminine vanity was flattered to the height of my desiring to well impersonate the great goddess I represented, and as I was hungry after my journey I longed for the nectar she had drunk and the ambrosia which had nourished her, when casting a glance around my gaze fixed itself upon a bottle of beer and a fat German sausage! My illusions of greatness were quickly dispelled by so mundane a sight. "Dr Schliemann," said I, with a resentful look at the beer and the sausage, "it is time I think we retired as we are keeping you from your supper."

Next morning our host sent a smart handsome Greek youth with us to be our guide. The ordinary business of this young Greek was to make friends with the wives and sweethearts of the labourers engaged on the excavations, in order to extract from them any of the precious finds which the workmen might have carried home in their pockets. I dare not enter into any archæological or historical details of the remains of the buried cities we were shown dating from the Stone Age, but if I remember rightly we

were told that the cities, three in number, built on this hill have each in the course of ages passed away, submerged by water which left behind sea-shells, sand, and débris so deep that a second and then a third city was built, each one showing steady improvement in the form of houses, ornaments, and extent over the previous ones. Proofs of the long intervals between the three cities were supplied not only by the houses and ornaments but by the sea-shells and débris left by the receding floods. I believe Dr Schliemann's most valued and precious finds were made on the part believed to be the Grecian Ilium. Numerous skeletons, human and animal, were found, with a large amount of pottery and a variety of other objects, which enabled him to trace the manners and customs of the various peoples who had at different epochs inhabited this site. We left next day after taking a tour round the different excavations that were being made, and carried away a lasting remembrance of the wonderful work which Dr and Mrs Schliemann were doing under considerable discomforts and difficulties. Troy is in such close proximity to the Dardanelles that I doubt not that the careful and detailed maps which Dr Schliemann took of the whole district have proved of great service to the Germans in this war — I believe the very acropolis of this ancient city has been used as a fort.

The last time I saw Dr Schliemann was in London when we both dined at the house of the late Mr John Murray. After dinner the lady

who had sat on his left hand while I had sat on his right, said to me, "How on earth did you get that German celebrity to talk when all the efforts I made to start a conversation with him failed?"

I smiled to myself as I thought of his personifying Homer and said to her, "You see I have had the great privilege of meeting him in the midst of his beloved work and was able to ask him how it had progressed."

CHAPTER XII

1877

MY VISIT TO STAMBOUL

Whilst at Constantinople I became much interested in the changes in connection with the treatment of the women of Turkey, which took place subsequent to the death of the much regretted Sultan Medjid. Sultan Medjid was succeeded by his brother, Sultan Aziz, a person of insipid personality, possessing none of the strong characteristics of his father nor any of the virtues of his brother. The only way in which he benefited his country was by the efforts he made to create a navy. These efforts did not have much practical result, however, owing to mismanagement and the corrupt administration of the naval department. His Majesty possessed no fighting tendencies, but reared a regiment of fighting cocks which he loved to watch, and childishly honoured the most valiant by hanging military decorations round their necks. In spite of his many failings Sultan Aziz did pretty well for the first ten or fifteen years of his reign, owing to a number of able Ministers like Ali Pasha, Fuad Pasha, Midhat Pasha, and one or two more, anxious for reforms and better administration.

Unfortunately his palace *entourage* consisted of a set of ignorant upstarts who prevailed on him to set aside the whole of his old and tried Ministers, and to replace them by a new set who traded in the purchase and sale of every post of importance within and without the capital. All the pashas and functionaries who bought these posts, for which they had paid heavily, and uncertain as to the length of time they were likely to hold them, drained in their turn the unfortunate people under their jurisdiction. The evils which followed this utter disorganisation were great, and ended in the dethronement of Sultan Aziz. During his imprisonment in Tcheraghan Palace overlooking the Bosphorus, and when standing at a window one morning he saw one of his men-of-war lying at anchor. On the deck was a sailor who took his belt from round his waist and bound it round his neck, and then walked three times round the deck. The Sultan rightly understood this to mean that the navy for which he had laboured was to be the means by which his death would be brought about, and that the three turns the sailor had taken round the deck signified that in three days he would be murdered. Some of the Sultan's ladies who had been allowed to accompany him in his imprisonment told me that on the third night they heard His Majesty cry for help, and that, when discovered dead the next morning, his death was found to be due to hæmorrhage from a severed artery in his arm. The rumour was spread abroad that he had committed suicide, a rumour which these ladies strongly denied, since they declared that not only

had they heard cries but that a belt belonging to the Sultan, worth a fortune owing to the fine gems with which it was ornamented, had disappeared.

The next monarch to sit on the Imperial throne was Sultan Aziz's nephew, Prince Murad, a gentle, humane, liberal-minded prince, who for years had lived in great seclusion, and who had not been permitted to go out of his palace nor to receive friends in it. This young prince, taken by surprise, and horrified at the tragic fate of his uncle, was dragged out of his quiet surroundings and put at the head of affairs. Quite unsuited for responsibilities for which he had had no training, and unable to cope with the intricacies of the corrupt administration he was so suddenly called upon to govern, this young prince fell into a nervous condition, and after three months' troublous reign was deposed in favour of his brother, Prince Hamid, who, it is believed, worked hard to bring before the people the undesirability of Prince Murad's occupation of the throne and his own pre-eminent suitability for the position of Sultan. A friend of mine told me that during Prince Murad's short occupation of the throne he went for a drive one day followed by a big escort. When passing down the street where my friend lived the latter inadvertently opened a window, unaware that Prince Murad was passing that way; and this simple act put him in mortal fear, as had the knowledge of it reached Prince Hamid's ears it would undoubtedly have been construed into an act of conspiracy, and he would have paid for it with his life. I was present at

the coronation of the luckless Prince Murad at Stamboul, a most interesting sight. A large party of English residents, headed by the Ambassador and his staff were given most excellently placed seats from which to view the ceremony, while at the same time they enjoyed the friendly attentions of the newly crowned Sultan.

As soon as Prince Hamid had consolidated his power on the throne he dropped his hypocritical mask of modest humiliation, and took within his own grasp every branch of the Administration, rendering his Ministers, one and all, helpless machines who could only move and work subject to his personal control and orders. The Sultan's helpers in this immense and despicable undertaking consisted of a large body of spies who daily and hourly brought him information on all that happened, or that was supposed to be happening in his Empire. This system of controlling everything himself was enlarged and carried to such an extent that even so insignificant a person as a sub-lieutenant could not obtain a short leave of absence unless the leave was personally approved by the Sultan, nor could a governor in the interior take a step even in a small matter concerning local interests without the Imperial consent and approval. Besides the terrible system of spies, Sultan Hamid kept in his pay a body of Albanian cut-throats, under whose valiant activity men of all ranks and of all ages completely disappeared, and no family dared ask or try to find out what had become of its missing member or members. In spite of this terrorising system Sultan Hamid

managed to reign for thirty-three years, owing to his great cunning and ability in safeguarding his own life. His system was to help in turn the different peoples and countries in his Empire, and so soon as he found the favoured country was becoming too forward or too strong, to drop it and give his Imperial favour to its natural rival. In this way there was perpetual discord in the units of his Empire but safety for himself. The Foreign Office of Turkey was absolutely under his sole and personal control, and he managed by treachery and false promises to hoodwink by turns all the Great Powers. This condition of things disgusted the patriotic Turks, who found all their zealous efforts to improve matters utterly frustrated.

It was during the zenith of Sultan Hamid's power and the extraordinary use he was making of it that I determined to spend a week in the vast and mysterious city of Stamboul where the *élite* of Turkish society lived. The city was like a city of the dead. The streets were silent; there were no carriages or pedestrians; here and there a mangy dog turned over a little heap of refuse. Only the bazaars, squares, and business parts of Stamboul teemed with crowds of all races and nationalities rushing wildly about in pursuit of their business. The fine old konaks and palaces were silent; no one was seen at the windows which were apparently hermetically sealed, while the entrance gates were strongly guarded. Yet crime could, and did run a free course in these apparently silent houses, similar to the crimes committed in monasteries in times gone by; and none beyond

those within the walls of the buildings were any the wiser of the acts of murder and cruelty that were committed there. The gates of the selamlics or men's apartments in these silent palaces stood always open; but at the time I visited Stamboul I was told that visitors were very rare as the Sultan had given strict orders that there should be no free intercourse between families or friends. The only people who were allowed freedom of entrance were the Imperial spies.

My first visit in Stamboul was to the palace of old Dervish Pasha. This palace comprised two vast separate portions, the haremlic for the women, the selamlic for the men. The apartments were carpeted with priceless Turkish carpets and had long low sofas running round three sides of the walls, spread with rich stuffs and cushions, but the whole rendered bizarre and truly oriental by the introduction of a few odd chairs and tables of common modern European work.

The family consisted of Dervish Pasha, his wife, a sweet, middle-aged lady, his two sons and his daughter-in-law, the wife of his younger son. I was most kindly received by all, and after sunset a most sumptuous dinner was served; our fingers were used in the place of knives and forks. We did not dress for dinner; the great lady took her place on the cushioned floor in a sort of white cotton tea-gown and with stockingless feet. None of the party appeared to have any idea or any knowledge of modern modes of living. The sons seemed to be utterly uneducated in spite of the fact that the younger had married one of the daughters of the Sultan, a clever little minx.

Since she was of the Royal house her husband, according to Turkish etiquette, had to stand with crossed arms awaiting her permission to sit down or her invitation to converse with her. After dinner, which the Pasha out of compliment to me had honoured with his presence, he returned to the selamlic, when his wife, profiting by a few moments of freedom, bitterly complained of the hard life ladies were compelled to lead under the rule of Sultan Hamid.

"He allows none of our friends to visit us, but instead imposes four of his lady spies on us who are in and out of the harem all day long. I dare not say a word, and though Allah knows how devoted my husband and all of us are to His Majesty's interests, yet I tremble for my dear sons lest some mischief-making spy reports falsely with regard to them."

The foxy old Dervish Pasha was so full of compliment to me with regard to the English nation, which I knew at heart he detested, that my curiosity was aroused, and I tried to find out his object in pretending to admire the English and their methods. Not to my surprise but to my disgust, I found that he daily collected numerous members of the Ulema (priestly) order about him, and that with much care he was preparing them to go to India on a mission to stir up the hatred of the Mohammedan population against the British rule.

My impressions on leaving the palace of Dervish Pasha after a couple of nights under his apparently hospitable roof were of the saddest. I felt that since for his own personal interests

Dervish Pasha, greatly hated by the people, was aiding the Sultan in his various nefarious practices the outlook for the future of Turkey was grave, and that sooner or later a catastrophe must occur.

My next visit, to the harem of the Minister of Police, proved more interesting than that to the palace of Dervish Pasha as it brought me into closer relationship with the feminine element, an element most difficult for an outsider to know in that wonderful Empire of Turkey. The Turkish woman lacks neither intelligence, feeling, nor dignity, but hampered as she is by insurmountable religious prejudices, by lack of freedom and knowledge of the world, she has no chance of moral development. My friend, Fatimé Hanoum Effendi, a gifted, intelligent lady, was delighted to see me after the lapse of a number of years, and at once broached the subject of feminine grievances, saying that everything had gone from bad to worse under Hamid's cruel, despotic rule. "We now," said she, "have lost even the little liberty we formerly enjoyed. We are shut up like my canaries in their cage to pine indoors and to peep through our barred windows as they do through the bars of their cage, while we long for liberty, life, and knowledge such as the rest of the world enjoys. Surrounded as we are by police spies and prevented from meeting our friends, unable to talk on any subject, even the question of dress is placed under strict control, what can we do? A few of us who have the courage to defy these ridiculous orders have to pay dearly for it by having our cloaks cut to shreds in the streets, obliging us to return home hurriedly and making us objects of

disgrace to all who see us. Under such circumstances as these, and there are others far more serious, how can our nation hope to progress? What we need is free intercourse with our friends and relations, both men and women, when the supposed soulless woman could prove her worth by sharing in the responsibilities of life, thus lightening its burden."

"I am glad," added Fatimé Hanoum, "that you chose the season of Ramazan for your visit as you will notice with interest how this holy month, when we fast during the day and feast during the night, is spent by us in Stamboul, when most of the closed doors of the konaks are open in hospitality to rich and poor, and alas! to Hamid's spies also, who hover about like bees round a hive. In spite of the strictness enjoined at ordinary times, at this season we are allowed to drive down the main streets, teeming with crowds of men loitering about in search of some chance fortune, as we leave the Mosque of St Sophia after service, when indignities and rudenesses are offered to us in a way that I am sure would shock you. By the bye, this evening ladies are allowed to take part in the service at the Mosque seated behind the lattice work of the part reserved for them. Though out of sight of the congregation of men we can both see the solemn ceremony and take part in the service. If you care to come with me dressed like a Turkish woman, and you do not mind the risk of some unpleasant adventure, do come, as you are sure to be interested."

I willingly accepted, confident that no one would be likely to pierce through my disguise, and

fortunately for me there was no question of having to put on the abominable yellow slippers. My instructions before we left were as follows:—

When we leave the carriage at the door of the Mosque you must on no account get separated from two strong women guides who will be one on each side of you, even if pushed and pinched and hustled generally by young Turkish sparks. On no account look up or answer anybody who might address you, and once safely in the Mosque sit by your hostess' side and perform the external ceremony of worship exactly as she does.

The enclosure set aside for the women worshippers was so crowded with ladies, old and young, that it needed great efforts on the part of the two guides, veritable old hags, to push their way towards the front and get us good seats so that we might watch the ceremony and follow the service. The sight appeared to me so imposingly solemn and impressive that, forgetting all my friend's instructions, I stared at the grand sight before me, when she whispered, "In Allah's name attend and do exactly as I and all the other women do. Should you be suspected of being a Ghiaour (infidel) the old hags here will tear you to pieces; as it is they are already staring at you and whispering among themselves."

I needed no further warning; but while taking all care I was still able to watch with the greatest interest the *ensemble* of that lovely Mosque, lit up by thousands of lamps swaying gently in harmony with the devout attitudes of the worshippers, who looked so entirely absorbed in their prayers to Allah and Mahomet his

prophet, that I felt sorry their solemn address was not to Allah alone, free from the superstitious influence of a false prophet by whose decrees no belief in or justice to women was permitted, and no mercy possible to anyone outside the pale of the Moslem world. As we left the Mosque we found a still bigger crowd watching for the exit of the women worshippers towards whom I found the conduct of the young Turks impudent and disorderly. They pushed themselves close to the various carriage doors, addressing rude remarks to the occupants whom they tried to pinch. One or two of these impudent young men who tried to get near me had to give up the attempt, as I was well protected on each side by the repulsive but useful guides who did not spare these young men in language or in blows, much to the amusement of the onlookers. As we went along the main street thronged with promenaders our carriage was followed in spite of an escort of police. All kinds of things were thrown into the carriage, *billets-doux*, fruit, flowers, bonbons, and lighted cigarettes. My friend Fatimé, greatly to my surprise, instead of feeling shocked or scandalised, appeared to enjoy the fun saying, "This is our Carnival, and the freedom it affords us is so great and so rare that we willingly pass over what to you must appear to be both improper and unseemly."

Although I found the ladies I met at her house intelligent and liberal-minded, yet they lacked the refinement of an educated European woman, doubtless owing to the want of a sound education and a lack of worldly knowledge. I

paid one or two other visits in Stamboul and noticed much discontent among the younger generation wherever I went, a discontent that seemed to me to be on the whole of a wholesome nature, but I saw no hope of their ideals being attained. I felt that possibly in time some improvement in the conditions of life for the women of Turkey might come, but I felt convinced it would not be during the reign of Sultan Hamid.

My last visit was to our dear old friend Raouf Pasha, one of the witnesses to my marriage at Monastir. I found him very much down on his luck, expressing, like so many of the other old friends I had met, his regret at being unable to go and see my husband for fear of giving offence to the Sultan, who strictly opposed any friendly intercourse of his Ministers with persons outside his own *entourage*. Raouf told me that, as it was, he was far from enjoying the Sultan's favour, and would have been placed on the list of the disgraced but for the great need the Sultan had of him in his diplomatic relations with European Powers, and went on to say, "When my opposition to some of his proposed acts becomes determined he tries me with bribes which I politely refuse."

As my companion Mademoiselle Jeanne came at this moment, the Pasha insisted on keeping us to dinner. I was glad to stay for the sake of our old friendship and the charm of his personality, which he still retained in spite of the many restrictions imposed upon him by Sultan Hamid. Raouf Pasha dined with us,

and after dinner his wife dressed in her rich court costume of embroidered satin and delicate veil honoured us by bringing us our coffee herself. The coffee was served in dainty little gold cups studded with diamonds, and fulfilled the triple desiderata of Turkish coffee, namely, that it should be as "Sweet as love, as strong as death, as hot as hate."

Our evening spent with His Excellency and his harem was most pleasant, and he kindly sent us back to our hotel in Pera in one of his carriages. When seated in the carriage I noticed two ugly faces flattening their noses against the glass door trying to get a good look at us. The persons to whom the faces belonged followed the carriage, while at every turn of the road other undesirable looking people joined them, so that quite a number of them were present at the door of the hotel when we alighted. These people ranged themselves in a circle round the hotel door in order to get a good look at us as we entered. I asked the porter who these people were and what their object was. He only laughed and said, "Madam, you need not trouble about these people. They are only the Sultan's police spies anxious to find out who His Excellency Raouf Pasha's guests were and where they were going."

Next morning Raouf Pasha received a pressing message from the Sultan requesting his presence at the palace.

"Who were your guests last night," said his Majesty in a suspicious way.

"My guests," replied Raouf Pasha, "were

Mrs Blunt and her companion, old friends who I was very glad to see."

"Mash Allah, Mash Allah (Thanks be to God, Thanks be to God). The Blunts are good friends of Turkey. I am pleased you received the hanoum. Give her my compliments next time you meet her, and tell her I am sorry not to have seen her at the selamlic for a long time."

This gracious message was an act of courtesy on the part of His Majesty which I do not pretend to have deserved after all I had thought and said about his mischievous mania for sacrificing the lives of so many innocent people in his endeavour to secure the safety of his own.

CHAPTER XIII

1878

MY VISIT TO ENGLAND

My husband was temporarily transferred to Adrianople during the Turco-Russian War (1877), and for several reasons I felt that I might well spend the time of his enforced absence from Salonika in a visit to England. In those troublous times no British official or his family could avoid being mixed up with the general current of events.

The Consulate was left in the temporary charge of Mr Suter, Vice-Consul at Volo. Mr Suter was a dear old gentleman but so nervous that on hearing that he must proceed in his official capacity on board a man-of-war that had just come into the bay he sent a message to say that it was too great a responsibility, and that I must telegraph to Mr Blunt for someone else to be sent in his place. Feeling at a loss as to what I ought to do I drove at once to his hotel where, to my dismay, I found him in bed almost suffocated by the fumes of a charcoal brazier, which would have killed him but for my timely arrival. When I got him round from his partial suffocation he was shaking all over in a condition of nervous

fright, and declared he would not face a man-of-war and that I must do my best to send someone else. Fortunately on my return to the Consulate I found the captain who had come in to see what was amiss. I explained the situation and begged him to express my regrets to the commander-in-chief, who not only kindly overlooked the lack of formalities but was the first to call at the Consulate. In the meantime I did my best with the Turkish authorities and attended to a number of other details such as my husband would have done. I felt greatly comforted on receiving a telegram from my husband saying that Mr S. would soon be relieved. At the end of a week Mr B. who was to relieve Mr S. arrived with his wife and daughter, a trio unsuited, so it seemed to me, for the position they were to occupy. Mr B., I learnt later, had earned the honour of representing the English Government by aiding some Member of Parliament who had been stranded in the part of Asia Minor where Mr B. lived. This gentleman in return for the hospitality shown him had obtained for Mr B. the post of Consul. Be this as it may, the impression Mr B. made on the naval officers was unfavourable, and when some of them were talking about him, ignorant of the presence of the two ladies, he was described as an imbecile who had no right to be at Salonika, when Miss B. got up in a huff, very natural under the circumstances, and said, "My papa is not an imbecile."

It annoyed me very much that Mr B. insisted on taking me under his official care, since the Governor and Dervish Pasha, who was Com-

mander-in-chief at that time of the Forces in Macedonia, were most attentive, inquiring daily after me and often coming to see if I needed any help. Dervish Pasha, the old hypocrite, used to make himself so much at home at the Consulate that when he came in the afternoon he would order one of the maids to spread his carpet of prayer and would go through his Namaz, very likely praying Allah and his prophet to forgive the crime of his doing so in the presence of a Ghiaour.

If he did, he would have been like one of the Sheiks-ul-Islam at Constantinople who, on receiving a visit from Mr Alison, the First Secretary at the Embassy, who was a fine Arabic scholar, called for his prayer carpet and devoutly petitioned Allah and Mahomet to forgive him addressing a dog of an infidel. When this devout Moslem had finished, Mr Alison asked permission to use the sacred carpet for the same holy purpose, and kneeling down he repeated a form of prayer in excellent Arabic, and ended with a special appeal to the Almighty to forgive him holding speech with a dog of a Mohammedan. The Sheik-ul-Islam learnt his lesson while Mr Alison enjoyed the joke.

At that time Albanians began to crowd into the streets of Salonika boasting that a big Albanian force was marching on the town, which news very naturally alarmed the Christian element. I did not credit the rumour, but, as our faithful Hussein Aga was with my husband in Adrianople, I thought it wise to ask Dervish Pasha to send a trustworthy policeman who could be in the house since our position was rather isolated. About dusk a wild-

looking, powerful Turk came in, salaamed, and said that Dervish Pasha had sent him to guard the house. I did not like the look of the man and liked much less his boastful manner. I therefore ordered him to remain outside the house and guard the door. As we were about to retire for the night one of the maids, Kusha, opened the door and walked in the direction of the garden gate, where she came across the policeman very drunk and excited. Drawing his sword he rushed on Kusha calling her a dog of a Ghiaour whose head would have to go. Kusha rushed into the house, locked and barred the door, and came upstairs breathless, followed by the two blackies who were trembling with fear. The beast of a man hammered at the door, calling out that he must come in. I knew the native character and the best way to impose upon it, so I opened a window and ordered him, with an apparent bravery, to leave the house at once and not to show his face again if he hoped to keep his head on his shoulders. On my repeating the order with still greater force he turned away and stumbled in the direction of the gate and cleared out. We watched him till he had gone some way down the street when the maids ran out and locked the gate. We locked and barred all the doors and shutters, but in spite of this we had but little sleep, watching for a possible return of our drunken policeman and packing in readiness for our voyage to Marseilles on the morrow. My party consisted of myself, my boy and his governess (Miss Garnett), and his nurse Milly the blackie who had had charge of him since his birth.

My decision to go to England and to stay there until my husband could return from Adrianople, proved a success. No sooner had I set foot on the soil of the dear old homeland than I felt that restful peace and relief which is so greatly appreciated by those whose lot it is to live in wild unsettled countries, where wars and massacres come unexpectedly, and where it is difficult to escape from their brutal effects. It was fortunate that in those now somewhat remote times discords leading to wars affected only a comparatively small number of people, whilst in this so-called civilised twentieth century, alas! the evil has taken so general a line, that hardly any part of the world appears to be free from its baneful blight. So far, Malta can be described as one of the few happy exceptions. Even on the question of food, thanks to the untiring efforts of His Excellency, Lord Methuen, we have been better off than elsewhere. Prices have, of course, gone up, and eggs and a few other luxuries are not to be found every day in the market, but these things are mere trifles.

My stay in England lasted nearly a year and gave me ample time to finish my book, *The People of Turkey*. There was a threatened delay in publishing it, owing to someone inaccurately describing it to my husband as a book dead against Turkey and in favour of Russia. Naturally at that moment (1878) it would not have been desirable to publish a book with such a tendency, consequently both my husband and Sir Henry Layard asked me to hold it back, as it might be objectionable to the Government. The thought

of delay in publishing was a great blow to me, but I was fortunate enough to be able to avert it by mentioning the incident to Lady Salisbury, who asked me the name of my publisher. On hearing that Mr John Murray was bringing the book out, she said, "Oh! that must be all right, as Murray would never publish a book opposed to the views of the Government, but, to make sure on this point, I will ask Mr Murray to send me the proof sheets which I will look over, and will consult with Lord Salisbury as to the publication of the work."

This most kind offer of Lady Salisbury soon settled the matter, and the opposition of my husband and Sir Henry Layard vanished when I wrote and told them of Lady Salisbury's kind action. The book, which is out of print now, was based on genuine facts free from all political questions with regard to Turkey and her people, while these memoirs, equally based on facts, but written in a freer manner, may, I hope, prove equally interesting to those who desire to know something of life in the Near East.

During my stay in London I had the privilege of a long talk with Mr Gladstone, whom I met at dinner at the house of the Marchioness of Bath. Mr Gladstone showed great interest in our conversation, especially regarding the unsettled state of Bulgaria, and wanted to know whether the Bulgarians would rest content with what they had got. I said, "Certainly not, as a country divided into two would not rest contented till it had got back all it could." The conversation then turned on Turkey and England's influence

over her. Although at the time I was a great admirer of Mr Gladstone, I could not help expressing the prevalent opinion in Turkey of the great harm his anti-Turkish policy had effected, and illustrated what I said by two or three examples, showing the great and powerful influence England had enjoyed in former times, and the very low position she now occupied in the opinion of Turkey. I do not think that Mr Gladstone much liked to dwell on this subject, but nevertheless both he and Mrs Gladstone were very kind to me, and said a lot of flattering things about my husband, in spite of the fact that my husband's political views were not in harmony with those of Mr Gladstone. I feel sure that Mr Gladstone was too great a statesman to ignore the merit of those who were opposed to him in political opinion.

I arrived in England in the height of the season when Hyde Park teemed with crowds of well-dressed people promenading in the spring sunshine, while Nature's soft green carpet and floral array made a pleasant background, and was repeated in the miniature gardens on the terraces and balconies of pretty houses and stately mansions. The fine shops too were full of the luxuries of the season. Cares and worries seemed left far behind. The whole *ensemble* of a London season make a most striking impression on visitors from abroad, who witness on a fine day a picture not to be seen elsewhere. I have heard many foreigners express this feeling, whilst others regret not being able to visit England owing to their ignorance of the language. Lady Burdett-Coutts, to whom

Sir Henry Layard had kindly given me a letter of introduction, sent me a card of invitation for all her receptions for the season. I much admired the sweet dignity of the hostess, and the beauty of the lovely gems which ornamented her evening gown at the first of her receptions I went to. After the exchange of a few kind courtesies, I found myself in a densely crowded room, but to my disappointment I did not see a single person I knew. Feeling rather out of it I sat down beside a solitary lady on the chance of getting into conversation with her. Unfortunately the lady was a strict disciplinarian on the question of etiquette, such as the French at that time, less acquainted with the English than they are to-day, represented as a people who would not make an effort to save a drowning person unless they had been previously introduced, and limited her replies to a distant "Ye-es" and so pointed a "No" to the two trifling remarks I made, that I thought it best to go elsewhere in the hope of better success. At the opposite end of the room I noticed a group of young people in lively conversation. I worked my way in their direction and accosted a young man gesticulating to a very pretty girl, and said in a sympathetic way, "What a pity such a pretty girl should be dumb," when he replied to me by pointing to his own mouth and ears, and made me understand that he too was deaf and dumb! I had a third unhappy experience in my efforts to make friends, and then beat a retreat and quietly walked to the supper-room, when, after enjoying some delicious dainties, I got into my carriage and drove home. I was

more fortunate at a few other receptions I went to, meeting old and making new friends. But the reception which stands out *par excellence* in my memory was that given by the Foreign Office to Lord Beaconsfield after he had been invested with the Order of the Garter. It was a grand and beautiful sight. All the Royal Family were there, with the exception of Her Majesty Queen Victoria. The foreign representatives were in full state uniform, vieing in colour with the ladies' lovely dresses. I was delighted to have had the opportunity of taking part in so interesting a reception, and though only the wife of an official in troubled Macedonia, I left the Foreign Office probably the happiest of its guests, for on meeting Lord Salisbury he stopped me and asked me when I was going back to Salonika. "That depends on your Lordship," said I. "Why, I am not keeping you here." "No, but considering that for nearly two years my husband has been with the disorganised Turkish Army under the very guns of the Russians, following this dreadful Russo-Turkish War, I am not going to leave London unless I have something good to tell him." This was an inspired little speech on my part which must have amused Lord Salisbury, as he began to praise my husband and added that no one in the Service had done such valuable work as he had. I bowed, thanked him, and added that I feared that would not be enough. He laughed and said, "Well, in a day or two you will hear something good." "In that case," I replied, "I will begin to pack up." On the third day I received a note from Sir Philip Currie,

the Under-Secretary of State, telling me that my husband had been appointed Consul-General at Salonika, and that my request that my expenses to England and back should be paid had been considered just, and that I should receive a cheque for the amount from the Treasury. Needless to say the news of these two important matters was a pleasant surprise to me, whilst my husband was much gratified to learn that his efforts to serve the Government to the best of his ability had been recognised.

Another pleasant surprise soon followed. On a warm bright day about the middle of May, Milly, the blackie, came to tell me that a gentleman had asked to see me but had given no name. I told her to show the visitor up, wondering who it could be. A fine handsome man, past middle age, dressed in a long sheepskin coat that went down to his knees, walked in. I could not hide my surprise, and wondered whether my visitor was quite right in his mind to come out in so wintry a coat on a hot day in the middle of the London season. He warmly shook hands with me, saying, "I am Lord Lucan—you must be surprised to see me in this sheepskin coat, but I put it on in memory of your good husband who had secured it as a precious possession during the Crimean War. When I asked him to get a similar coat for me he insisted on giving me his own, and it proved of such great service to me that I put it on to-day in order that you might see it, as I want you to tell him how much I appreciated the gift." I thought it most kind of Lord Lucan, who I had never met before, to come and see me and talk so nicely

about my husband, who had begun his career in the Service by being attached to Lord Lucan's staff as First Interpreter to the British Forces in the Crimea. In consequence of my husband's useful services and the part he took in the Battle of Balaclava, he was awarded the Crimean Medal and clasps and the decoration of the Turkish Medjidié, which he valued with the friendship and confidence of his chief (Lord Lucan) to whom he became deeply attached.

Though alone in London and not knowing many people yet the little I saw of society greatly charmed me and made me feel prouder than ever of the superiority of the English nation.

My return to Salonika preceded my husband's return as he had to remain at Adrianople during the Russian occupation, when he earned further approval in his difficult task of trying to settle the local questions in which the Russians, Roumanians, Turks, and Christians were concerned.

Shortly before my return a new Russian Consul had been appointed to Salonika who had been with the Russian Army on the Shipka Pass. On learning that Mr Blunt, whose return to Salonika was daily expected, was Consul-General at Salonika he was heard to say, "Blunt, Blunt, surely he cannot be the same man I was ordered to ——!" and he made a click with his mouth, and passing his hand round his neck he made his friends understand that he been empowered to cut Mr Blunt's throat if he could. He called on me and I found him to be such a nice-looking, refined man that in spite of his having been ordered to try and compass my husband's death I asked him to

come to lawn tennis on the following day, an invitation he gladly accepted. Unfortunately the fates willed it otherwise. The poor fellow, whilst washing his hands before coming to the Consulate, dropped down and was found in a dying condition by his faithful kavass. The kavass, horrified, rushed for the doctor and came to me for assistance. I went at once, and I shall never forget the impression of that room of death where the young fellow lay stretched on the floor. A bright ray of sunlight played on his face, and an old doctor bent over him trying to feel his pulse, while a solemn group of ten fat, well-fed Russian monks stood by watching. As I came in the doctor rose, looked at the monks, and asked whether one of them would be willing to be bled as there might be some chance of saving the patient if some fresh blood could be transfused into his veins. The monks in answer to this appeal one and all cleared out, while the kavass, a lean Albanian, came forward stretching out both his bared arms saying, "Doctor, doctor, take all the blood out of me so long as you save my master's life."

The doctor then asked me to help him. I willingly assented to this request, thinking at the same time of the mysterious ways of Providence that made me be called upon to help to try to bring back to life the man who, had he had the chance, would have taken from me the life of my precious husband.

CHAPTER XIV

1882-1887

After the Russo-Turkish War was ended, peace was patched up by the Berlin Conference on promises made by Sultan Hamid, promises which, by the way, he never intended to keep. This peace only succeeded in promoting discontent among the interested parties and gave Turkey a breathing time after her late exertions.

Turkey at that time possessed a great statesman and an honest man, Midhat Pasha, who endeavoured to bring about reforms on the basis of a constitutional government, and was apparently allowed a certain amount of freedom of action by Sultan Hamid. So hopeful did internal affairs look that my husband and other well-wishers of Turkey began to think that an era of better management of Turkish affairs had begun. It was at this juncture that Sir Hubert E. H. Jerningham wrote the following clever notes of my husband, which I have recently found in his private correspondence :—

"En Bulgarie á ce qu'on dit,
Vous avez fait merveille,
De Salonique il m'est écrit
Le Turc par vous s'éveille.

Recevez donc mon compliment
Dans la vieille Angleterre,
Car on rencontre rarement
Votre taille sur terre."

I'm said to be a polyglot,
Le "glot" n'est pas terme "poli"
What I may be I do not wot
Si ce n'est que je suis l'ami.

But His Majesty, Sultan Hamid, set to work after a short time to frustrate the efforts of Midhat Pasha and persecuted this great reformer and his two colleagues, one of whom was Hamid's brother-in-law, by exiling them to Asia Minor, where, after torturing and starving the unfortunate trio for a time, he had them assassinated, when Midhat's head was placed in a case and sent to the Sultan at His Imperial Palace Yildiz labelled, "Old Antiquities," to demonstrate to His Majesty that his commands had been carried out. This tragic calamity made Mr Blunt, who had been a great friend of Midhat, feel that he must give up all hope of the reformation of Turkey. It was about this time that Sultan Hamid caused seven of his Ministers to be murdered, and after their deaths had been accomplished he was heard to say "Turkey needs a Hamid."

My husband's promotion to the position of Consul-General over a vast area necessitated our moving to a larger house on my return from England, so that the Chancellerie could be under the roof where we lived.

We fortunately secured a fine old two-storied konak, from the front of which we had glorious views over the Bay of Salonika and Mount

Olympus. There was a large garden with carriage drive and main entrance, at what may be described as the back of the house. A wide entrance led into a palatial hall, which in oriental fashion had numerous windows, while ten spacious rooms opened on to the hall. The upper floor was similar to the ground-floor, but in addition there was a wide terrace, from which we enjoyed the views and the sunsets.

I at first felt rather puzzled over the important question of furnishing this grand old palace. However, with the aid of carpets and oriental stuffs, which I had collected during many years, of old Spanish chests, beautifully carved, brought by the exiled Jews to Salonika, of Chinese porcelain from Bulgaria and many other treasures, I transformed the old palace into a comfortable home.

The next few years passed quietly. We had our excitements certainly, one of which was one of the recurrent great fires, which destroyed a great part of the town but fortunately stopped short of the powder magazine.

Several distinguished visitors came to Salonika, one of whom was Archduke Stéphan of Austria. The Prince one morning paid an early, unofficial visit to my husband, and in his charming way asked whether he could see me. My husband sent him up to me telling Hussein to announce that an Austrian officer desired to see me. I was struck by the Archduke's fine personality and we entered into an animated conversation. I had no notion who he was and his incognito gave a piquancy to the situation; he went for a drive

with me, and when we came back my husband told me who my visitor was. I learned later that encounters of this kind were amongst Archduke Stéphan's greatest pleasures.

This visit was shortly followed by an equally interesting one from M. Léon de Tinseau, a French author, who was much interested in Turkish affairs, and who was good enough on the strength of my having written a book on *The People of Turkey* to call me a *collègue de profession.* I was much amused at this title of importance, to which I hardly felt I had a claim.

The Italian Fleet paid one or two visits to Salonika, and every now and then one of our British men-of-war looked in and anchored in the Bay for a few days. It was during these years that my boy used to come back from Wellington to spend his holidays with us, and later on when at Oxford he brought friends with him to enjoy the splendid sport that the country afforded. At times we paid flying visits to Constantinople, when we stayed with my brother and were kept *au courant* with the affairs of the Near East by our friendship with the successive ambassadors, and by our intercourse with the various Turkish officials, most of whom we had known for years.

It was on one of these visits to Constantinople that a ball was given at his palace by Fouad Pasha. A party of the guests asked me whether they might be permitted to visit the harem. I said I thought so and spoke to Fouad Pasha who at once assented, took a key from his pocket, and proceeded to unlock the door leading to the ladies'

apartments. Several of the guests in their pretty ball dresses passed through the door and were being followed by some of the attachés of the various embassies, when Fouad Pasha quietly turned towards the latter, and with a smiling face said, "Messieurs, je le regrette, mais vous n'êtes accredités qu'à la Porte."

But in 1888 a new era began, for it was in that year that we learnt that the Mediterranean Squadron was about to visit Salonika, under the command of H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh, and accompanied by H.R.H. Prince George and Prince Louis of Battenberg. We were delighted at the news, and determined to have in readiness everything we could think of that would be agreeable for our guests whose presence in Salonika was taken as an indication of the future policy of the British Government. The Turks, who always had a liking for the English, appeared pleased on hearing the news, while the rest of the population was jubilant, each in its own sphere hoping to derive some benefit from so important an event.

When it was announced that the Squadron was sighted, Turks, Greeks, Bulgars, and Jews gathered in crowds on the shore and watched the arrival of the men-of-war with admiration, not unmixed with fear as to the direction the great power of England would take in the near future. I sat on our terrace and my heart palpitated with joy as I watched the *Queen of the Seas* glide majestically into the Bay and cast anchor facing Mount Olympus, the mountain from which the Grecian gods and immortals had darted their projectiles of thunder

and lightning, while below, by contrast, the guns of the Squadron thundered to announce its arrival. This contrast marked the great evolution time had worked, transforming the poetical into real and more effective power.

The visit of the Squadron lasted ten days and gave fresh life and animation to the town. On the day following the arrival, I had the honour of entertaining at luncheon T.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh, Prince George, and Prince Louis of Battenberg, and several of the captains, among whom were Captain Boyes, Captain Alington, Captain Cardale, Captain Rice, Captain Pringle, and Captain Palliser.

I was much struck by the sound common sense the Duke displayed in the knowledge of what was necessary in the surroundings of Government officials, for the maintenance and dignity of the position of England. His Royal Highness complimented us on the house we had acquired for the Consulate, and said how different it was from other consulates he had visited, and how he wished the Government had more consuls like my husband. Perhaps some of my readers will find no more interest in Consular abodes in the Near East than did some of those in authority at home. Nevertheless, the subject happens to be an old one and a most important one to England, as well as to members of the Consular Service. On one occasion when the subject was before the House of Commons a Member of the Opposition suggested, "That consuls or Government representatives might live in tents." It is largely due to ignorance of this kind and ignorance of the value of the

Near East to England that matters have reached the present muddle.

A few days after the arrival of the Squadron we gave a ball, when everybody in Salonika was asked to meet the Royal guests. Mr Blunt and I felt some misgivings as to the success of this ball, but thanks to the kind help of Mr Viscovitch, the Austrian Consul-General, in the arrangement of the reception, all went off very well. There was much variety in the obeisance of the ladies, some knelt on the ground, others salaamed, but many of the younger ladies, pretty and well dressed, curtsied gracefully. We arranged that there should be no introductions since all were our friends, but I was much charmed by Prince George who always came up to me and said, "Do you think, Mrs Blunt, that young lady," indicating some one, "would like to dance with me?"

This request on his part greatly pleased me, as young as he was he must have already acquired some knowledge of human nature, and have known how the honour of dancing with him must have been appreciated. His choice invariably fell on the right person.

My husband asked one of the Duke's aides-de-camp whether we could know if the Duke was pleased with our arrangements, he replied, "If you see His Royal Highness take only one refreshing drink be sure he is not pleased, if two, leave him alone, he is quite contented."

To my joy my husband came to me when the Duke left and said, "It is all right, my dear, the Duke has had three drinks."

When I thought I had said good-night to all

our guests, to my surprise I found a fat Armenian lady covered with jewels comfortably ensconced in the corner of a sofa, smoking a cigarette, looking as if she intended to stay there. I suggested to her that the house had to be closed. "Yes, Janoum" (my heart), said she, "but it is still dark and I dare not go into the streets lest some one should attack me and rob me of my precious gems."

"Do not be afraid," said I, "I will give orders to one of the Consulate guard to take you to your home."

At a garden party given by Monsieur Charnaud a British subject, a young nephew of my husband was walking along one of the pathways down which I was conducting the Prince. This small boy, Turkish fashion, kept his hat on as a token of respect. I told him in Greek to take his hat off, when the Prince laughingly exclaimed, "I understood what you said, you told him to take his hat off." The Prince who was fond of his cousins at Athens must have picked up some modern Greek when he was there.

A big shoot was arranged at Catarina to which Prince George did not go. I asked him if he would like me to arrange a little dance for him at the Consulate free from formalities. He gladly accepted and I think enjoyed the dance. He was much amused next day to hear it said that I had invited all the cream of Salonika to meet him and had left all the sour milk behind.

The Duke's At Home on board the flagship *Alexandra* was a great success, largely owing to my husband's direction of the dances, to which he

added some novelties of his own and made it so lively and amusing that Prince George said, "It is worth coming to Salonika to dance a quadrille under Mr Blunt's direction."

On certain days people of all nationalities and of all classes were allowed to visit the men-of-war, a privilege they greatly enjoyed, and great amazement was felt and expressed at the order and discipline which prevailed on board. The native people were filled with wonder at the power, strength, and harmonious organisation of the Navy, since these qualities are foreign to the oriental character, as well as at the energy and activity of the sailors and the variety of their sports. The Governor sat by me during a tug-of-war between the officers and men, which he watched with the greatest admiration and said, "Now I understand the power and greatness of the English nation which, unlike ours, is reared from childhood in the practice of physical and moral powers."

This dear old pasha, fat and listless, judged and condemned his nation from his own personal experience. In order to comfort him I said, "Effendi, you should bear in mind the natural wealth of the country Providence has given you, where there is little need for energy for those who, like your people, are content with Nature's gifts."

Owing to my husband's insistence that the Turkish authorities must be responsible for the safety of the officers and men of our ships who came on shore, nothing untoward ever happened, beyond perhaps the smashing of a few panes of glass by some one or more men who had indulged rather freely. Food and drink at that time were

abundant and pure, and our men spent a good deal of their pocket-money on the good fat geese and turkeys which were to be had so cheaply in those days. Occasionally a sailor had some fancy of his own which caused much amusement, as when one, with his pockets well furnished with gold, could think of no better way of spending some of it than in the purchase of a small donkey. He deemed his pet worthy of special attention, and took it to the chief barber in Salonika and requested him to shave it. The barber indignantly refused, considering it beneath his dignity to do so, but the persistent bluejacket put his hand in his pocket and brought out and placed on the counter a sovereign. The golden piece proved so alluring that the barber put his dignity aside and shaved, perfumed, and powdered the little donkey, which showed its whole-hearted disapproval of the performance by braying and kicking all the time, to the great amusement of the onlookers. A small crowd collected when the proud owner, on completion of his pet's toilette, jumped on its back and promenaded the streets. On finding it was time to return to his ship he insisted on the Jew boatmen taking both him and his donkey, when doubtless, on arriving on board, the joke was soon brought to an end.

We watched with regret the departure of this fine squadron, which left a strong impression of the power of England on the people. None of the foreign squadrons, French, Italian, or Austrian, which now and again visited Salonika could in any way compare with ours, nor did they gain the esteem and confidence enjoyed by the British Squadron.

I do not intend to enter into the political reasons that had brought and continued to bring squadron after squadron to Salonika. All I can say is that we were delighted to see them, especially for a prolonged stay. Their visits coincided with troubles in Crete, Armenia, and Macedonia. Those prolonged visits gave us the opportunity of becoming acquainted with many distinguished personages whose friendship and sympathy last to the present day.

On one occasion when the Duke of Edinburgh was again at Salonika in command of the squadron an epidemic of smallpox was raging in the town, and the Duke asked me if I could recommend a reliable washerwoman to wash his and the Prince's clothes. I said my washerwoman was reliable, and that I would give her one of my visiting-cards so that when she came for the washing she might be recognised. I simply wrote "washerwoman" on one of my usual visiting-cards. A few days later to our great amusement one of the captains asked me how many Mrs Blunt's washerwomen there were in Salonika, since many cards bearing this inscription had been brought to the ship. It had not occurred to me how easily my cards could be stolen from the houses I visited at and be made use of by the washerwomen who desired work from the Squadron.

Among the foreign ships that visited Salonika those of Austria were certainly the best, and the officers were gentlemen. The captain of one of the Austrian men-of-war was an old friend of ours, and when I met him one night at

dinner I cordially shook hands and asked in a bantering way when the Austrian Fleet was coming to take possession of Salonika. He looked all round and then said, *sotto voce*, "Quand nous aurons l'argent voulu, Madame." My husband came up immediately afterwards and by chance asked the same question, when the captain, reverting to his official position, said, "Jamais, monsieur le Consul, jamais."

This was at the time when Austria had begun to work seriously in Macedonia through the agency of officers disguised as engineers, pedlars, or sportsmen, who returned to the Austrian Consulate and drew maps of the places they had visited. I broached the subject with Redjeb Pasha, one of the highest and most honourable generals in the Turkish Army, who for a short time had command of the forces in Macedonia. His answer was, "I know better than anyone the work Austria is doing in the country with the object of taking possession of Salonika when a favourable opportunity occurs, but I am tied and helpless like the rest of my party under Sultan Hamid and his infamous regiment of spies whom we come across at every step."

Redjeb Pasha built himself a kiosk (country-house) close to Salonika, and thoughtlessly named it "Yildiz," after Sultan Hamid's kiosk. He gave a small party and asked us and one or two of the other consuls. On the day following the party one of the spies telegraphed to Sultan Hamid that Redjeb Pasha had turned traitor, that he intended to take possession of Macedonia,

that he was conspiring with the foreign element, that he already called his house the Imperial Palace, and so on. That same evening Redjeb was dismissed from his post and ordered to leave at once for a distant part of the Empire, where he was put in charge of a body of Turkish troops without pay and without food for himself or his men. He did his best for some years when the Young Turkish Party requested his presence at Constantinople. Redjeb returned, but alas! only lived three days. At his funeral he received the honours and attentions his valour deserved, but which had been denied him in life.

CHAPTER XV

1888

If I remember rightly it was close upon Christmas that the Mediterranean Squadron, under the command of Admiral Lord Walter Kerr, came in, much to our delight as well as to the delight of the people of Salonika, and especially of the ladies, who appeared to have lost their hearts to the officers during the previous visits of the Squadron. The weather, though cold, was bright, and the season promised to be a gay one, except perhaps to the winged species such as the ducks and geese, disturbed from their peaceful haunts by the guns of the sportsmen. The shooting was a great attraction to the officers, and it was no uncommon sight to see the sailors taking back to the ship a fine fat goose for a roast on festive days.

We gave a ball, which everybody appeared to enjoy, and this was followed by an equally successful one given by M. Charnaud. This latter ball was a particularly lively party, enhanced by the presence of M. Charnaud's four young and pretty daughters, as well as by a number of ladies who spoke English. Free from the cares and responsibilities of a hostess, I danced until

the approach of dawn when the band struck up "God save the Queen." Some of our gallant young officers, full of life and energy, insisted on unharnessing the horses of my carriage and dragging me home in triumph themselves, a most chivalrous attention which I had in no way expected, and which consequently was all the more appreciated, coming as it did from such lovable friends.

The French Consul and Madame de Lacretelle gave a charming ball in the refined French style in honour of the British Squadron, where the cotillon was specially well danced, and dainty prizes of Parisian style were prepared and awarded by Madame de Lacretelle. The Consul and his wife were a most distinguished couple, with whom we joined in efforts to introduce modern ideas and manners into Salonika. The Jewish element and a few Greek families left in Salonika were among the first to adopt our suggestions. The rest of the society consisted chiefly of Levantines who gradually followed suit, being less under the control of their father confessors than were the ladies of Adrianople.

Every nation was represented at Salonika by a Consular Agent. Some of the consuls were of genuine nationality, others were of local origin; the whole posse of consuls was like a basket of fruit picked at random in the orchard. Some few were fine specimens, others mediocre or poor. One gentleman was the Consular representative of four nations, and when he received His Excellency the Governor on State occasions he arranged four sofas, one in each corner of his reception-room,

and took His Excellency from one corner to another, at each of which he adopted the Consular cap of the particular country he represented at the moment, and gave His Excellency greetings in the appropriate language.

The great hospitality of the officers on board and their efforts to enliven the sleepy old town succeeded so well, that they made that Christmas season one of lively gaiety. Those were happy, peaceful times; but should any old naval friends visit Salonika at the present time of great upheaval, they will not find it possible to enjoy their favourite pastime of sport, nor will they meet any of the set of old residents who formerly welcomed them.

By way of consolation after our friends had left, I decided to go and visit my brother at Constantinople, and my dear mother at Brussa. My boxes were packed, when about the eighth day after the Squadron had steamed away, as we were on the point of retiring to bed, we heard the fire-alarm guns. Fires were of fairly frequent occurrence but were always alarming, since so many of the houses were old, and like the Consulate, were built of wood. I went on to the terrace to see in which direction the fire was, and to my relief I found it had started some miles away from the Consulate. I attached no particular importance to the strong wind blowing at the time. When I came down from the terrace I found my husband ready to go out to the region of the fire, and in accordance with his usual habit he left things at home under my care, merely saying as he went off that I had

better not have anything moved out of the house before Mr Routh, the insurance agent, had been. Mr Routh, an easy-going gentleman, remained in his house in bed till eight o'clock the following morning.

The fire was a terrific one and ran down the hillside like a burning river, devouring every obstacle in its way. The strong wind fanned the flames and carried sparks and burning embers right and left, so that the fire spread rapidly and advanced in our direction. Still no one suspected it would reach the Consulate, surrounded as it was by its large garden. No one came in to help or advise me. Our guards and men servants were absent looking after their own homes and families. Live embers fell on the house twice, but the maids and I put them out. It made me anxious, however, for Mr Routh had not come, and I did not like to begin clearing the house of furniture after what my husband had said. I felt desperately troubled as I watched the miserable Jewish quarter behind the Consulate blazing, and saw the poor people stumbling along with their furniture on their backs, some of which burst into flames as burning bits of wood, carried by the strong wind, fell on it, whilst others carried little children in their arms and encouraged their poor wives. Anxiety on our own account increased, when, on going on the roof to see the progress of the fire, I felt a hot puff at my back and saw a blazing bit of wood on the staircase I had to go down. I tucked up my skirts and beat a hasty retreat, only to find my little Greek maid in hysterics. I shook her by the shoulders

and ordered her to stop it, and told her that if she lay where she was she would be burned with the house. This roused her, and her Greek courage and intelligence restored, she was seized with a good inspiration, and asked me to allow her to get my boxes, all ready packed for my visit to my brother, into the garden. She dragged the heavy trunks down, and in this way saved my laces and other precious possessions. In the meantime the terrible conflagration was getting nearer to us. On going into the garden I noticed to my dismay a bright flame like a huge torch on the roof. This must have given the alarm to the people round that the Consulate was on fire, and attracted the attention of the Turkish authorities, who walked into the garden in a body, headed by His Excellency the Governor and the Commander-in-chief. Turkish fashion they were spectators only, and all sat down and watched the fire spread all about the Consulate like lightning. The red tiles dropped down from the roof like tears of blood. The Turks looked sorry and sympathetic, and by way of comfort said "Kismet," and that it was the will of Allah, and that it was better that the fire should attack property than destroy life. The only people who displayed any energy and activity were the young captain of the Turkish *Stationnaire* and half a dozen of his smart sailors, who went into the drawing-room and snatched away whatever attracted their attention, and loaded the things into two of the carriages, and drove them some way up the Kalamaria road where they left them unguarded. Fortunately a friend, Mr Alson,

noticed them as he was on his way to help us, and had them taken into his house, and then came down to see to the safety of the horses. The poor beasts were stamping and neighing with terror, but refused to move till the coachman came and led them away. The house was now nearly in ruins, but the flag was still flying on the roof. The Governor at last made a move, saying it was time to leave the burning premises, as no more could be done. I made a stand at the garden gate, determined not to leave so long as the flag was flying, and made all the women servants pass out before me to see that all were safe. They were all empty-handed except my little Greek maid, who I noticed was tightly holding something in both her hands. I asked her what it was.

"Madame," said she, with an air of great importance, "here are the keys of the house."

Everyone laughed in spite of anxiety and sorrow, as we turned and gazed on the mass of burning embers which had been the house. The flag had now gone, and as I turned to come away my husband appeared besmeared all over with black, his face smutty and half of his beard scorched away. He had spent the whole night in making efforts to protect life and property and had accomplished much. For these services he received the thanks of the Sultan and the Grand Decoration of Liakat, which I preciously guard, together with other beautiful orders and decorations he received from time to time as mementos of his long and distinguished career.

H.M.S. *Australia* came down from Athens to

help at this time, and I need hardly say how considerate the officers were towards us in our trouble and how generous they were in helping the destitute and homeless people, who were chiefly Jews of the poorest class who were reduced to living under any shelter they could find. Blankets, clothing, food were generously distributed at once, and a little later charitable contributions followed from all directions.

The fire was a great calamity for us as well, but we had to do the best we could. We regretted most of all that the gates of the fine old Consulate were for ever closed to our dear friends in the Navy, whom we had so loved to entertain there.

I paid a flying visit to my brother at Constantinople and then went on to Brussa to see my dear mother, who was now a widow, my father having died but recently. I was struck afresh with my mother's qualities of bravery and simplicity. Shortly before leaving the Consulate she had been sitting at her window overlooking the garden one morning when she saw a wild-looking man, yatagan in hand, rush in through the gate and take up a position in a corner of the garden with his back to the wall evidently ready to defend himself. He was quickly followed by half a dozen policemen, who formed a semi-circle round him, unwilling to approach within striking distance of the yatagan which he flourished at them while he said, "You know that I am Andon, the well-known brigand, whose yatagan never yet failed him. The first among you who takes a step in my direction may look upon himself as a dead man. Come on, my braves, and take your chance." My mother,

hearing this and seeing the position of the police, walked down the garden and ordered the police to stay where they were. She then ordered Andon to hand his yatagan to her. Taken by surprise or perhaps lost in admiration of her courage he handed it to her, saying, "Madame, I am ready to hand over my arm of defence and my life to you, but I would not give it to those dogs," indicating the policemen, "till I had despatched a few of them to accompany me into the next world."

Having handed his yatagan to mother, he next held up both his hands for her to fasten the handcuffs round his wrists, when he quietly walked away with his guard.

Mother was well known in the country for miles round for her great kindness to the people. My sister Matilda used to tell a good story of how one day mother went into the village where everyone knew her, and where she was in the habit of getting all her servants. On sighting her arrival some of the beggarly families collected round her and poured out grievous tales of their poverty and misery, pointing to their tattered, barefooted daughters to confirm their statements. Mother, much affected by this tableau of misery, got a cart and placed as many of these tatterdemalions in it as it would hold and took them to the Consulate. My sisters went to meet mother at the door on her return home, when to their surprise and dismay they saw six or seven unkempt girls, grinning with delight, jump down from the cart. My sisters wondered what had possessed mother to bring these girls, and in answer to their

looks of inquiry she said, "Dears, I found these poor creatures looking so starved and miserable that I thought I would bring them home with me, so that they could be washed and have some dinner, but if you find their presence objectionable they can go home again in the afternoon."

From her young days my dear mother showed sympathy and gave help to all the sick poor she came across. She lived in Therapia, and in those days a colony of Croatians dwelt in tents on a bit of bare ground at the back of the garden. A small gate opened on to the ground where the Croatians, who were hereditary gardeners and professional thieves when opportunity served, lived, and through which they entered to work in the garden. My mother always looked after them when they or their children were sick, and the whole colony was devoted to her, much as dogs are devoted to their master. One day when mother was walking in the garden close to the small gate, she saw it open mysteriously and one of the Croatians came in, putting the fingers of one hand on his lips to beg her to say nothing, and hurriedly placed between her hands a small but heavy bag and quickly went out closing the gate behind him. Mother took the bag into the dining-room, thinking it probably contained some fruit, and emptied the contents on to the table, when to her amazement a perfect stream of gems, emeralds, rubies, and pearls poured forth and shone with brilliance in the sunshine. Not knowing what to do with so valuable a treasure she sent for Count Pisani, a friend of the family, who was the Keeper of Archives of the Embassy, and asked his counsel.

Together they decided it would be best to send the bag of jewels to the Mayor of Therapia as he might possibly hear of the owner who had lost so great a fortune. The Mayor evidently thought "that possession was nine points of the law," since in three days' time he had secured a post as pasha, evidently having paid for the position with the treasure so confidingly given to him.

I was struck on revisiting Brussa with the method of disinfection my mother always practised with regard to goods brought to the house. A trough of vinegar stood outside the entrance at the back door of the house, and into this everything that could be washed was soused before being brought indoors. My mother had lost her sister Sophia in Constantinople from plague when they were all girls together, and this had made a great impression upon her. My Aunt Sophy was a lovely girl, judging from a miniature of her my mother had, which as a child I much admired. She was a clever linguist and used to translate documents for the Embassy in the time of Lord Ponsonby. She was also a clever artist and designed and worked beautiful embroideries. One day when plague was rampant in Constantinople and when no one left the house unless it was imperative my aunt ran short of some silks she needed for her work. Seeing a pedlar pass by who sold skeins of silk, and deeming that it would be safe to buy of him she let down a string from her window, to which the pedlar fastened the skeins she chose. Drawing up the string she proceeded to use the silks. Shortly after this she was attacked by plague and died in a few days,

having, so it was thought, received infection through her purchase.

My mother and I stayed at Kucutlu, the village a few miles from Brussa, where there were the remains of some old Roman baths, and I thoroughly enjoyed a plunge morning and evening into the deep, cool waters of the huge marble swimming-baths. But my visit had to come to an end, and I returned to Salonika to start household anew in the charming villa of "Mon Plaisir," most kindly lent us by M. Charnaud, and to prepare for a large bazaar in aid of the poor destitute people of Salonika.

The bazaar was a great success, very largely owing to the generosity of Admiral Lord Walter Kerr and the officers of the Squadron, among whom were Sir Rosslyn Wemyss, Lord Charles Beresford, and many others who in those days promised great things by their intelligence and their energy, and in these days have accomplished them.

CHAPTER XVI

1889

After the burning down of the Consulate, Monsieur Charnaud most kindly offered us the loan of his house, Villa Mon Plaisir, as a temporary home. We gladly accepted this kind offer and found the villa a delightful, spacious, and well-furnished house which came as a God-send after the disastrous fire.

Sultan Hamid had formed a Ministry of Public Works, a fraudulent body which acquired land in Salonika and elsewhere by the simple method of annexing what it required where it desired, without any reference to the wishes of the owners or compensation to them. In this way a fine part in Salonika called Boulevard Hamidia came into existence, which was set apart for the construction of fine houses suitable for consular abodes. Our Consulate was the first to be built and was promised to us by a certain date. I was fortunate enough to get Portocal Effendi, the Minister of Public Works, to allow me to make several improvements in the original plans for our house. While we were comfortably installed at Villa Mon Plaisir awaiting the building of the Consulate I asked my two nieces, Mary and Isabelle de

Bilinski, to come and stay with us for a few months. They were both sweet, pretty girls and I was glad to have them with me, especially when the Squadron under the command of Admiral Lord Walter Kerr came in. There were many old friends amongst the officers whom my husband and I were delighted to see, and we were specially pleased when we heard that there was a possibility of the Squadron making a prolonged stay. The possibility became a reality, the ships being anchored in the Bay for three months as a standing protest on the part of England during the abominable Armenian troubles. I believe that on two or three occasions the Squadron stood in readiness to sail for Constantinople; but even in those days the policy of "wait and see" was in vogue, and stopped this most powerful and advantageous step from being taken. The brilliant opportunity was lost which would have resulted in incalculable advantages to Turkey as well as to England, by giving an entirely different turn to the train of events that ensued. The oriental character with its fatalistic belief in "kismet" is not easily moved to action or mere menace or distant danger, whilst it soon yields to determined action whether it likes it or not. In connection with this it is regrettable to have to state that the Germans by their countless ways and devices, from treacherous actions to brutal force, which none of the sounder Ministers of the Turkish Empire were capable of opposing or resisting, gave rise to the powerful influence they acquired over the treacherous Young Turkey Party, and made this party do the ignoble work which lay beyond their reach, and which has largely con-

duced to bring about the present situation. God alone knows how it will end for Turkey and her people.

Exceptions of course exist among the Turks, but it is generally recognised that the love of honours, decorations, and money earned with the least possible trouble will get the better of the patriotism of the majority.

Some five years ago I had an interesting conversation on the organisation and future prospects of their constitution with a staunch member of the Young Turkey Party who was passing through Malta. The first thing that struck me in the formation of this proposed constitution was, that no mention whatever was made of any reforms, conventions, or arrangements in favour of the vast Christian element within the borders of the Turkish Empire. Passing over several minor details the next point which specially struck me was the hungry avidity with which he broached the financial question. "Money, money, Hanoum, is all we require, and we are trying to get it on a large scale."

On my questioning him where and how they could get it, he said, "Why, from Germany, England, France, and Italy."

"But surely," I said, "these Powers are not desirous of parting with their money for nothing."

"No, Hanoum, we know that; we have already arranged to give the Powers concessions for railways and other works in close proximity to each other, relying on the objections and disputes that will arise between them; and if they come to blows we shall get the native workmen to strike or to

set the works on fire. You are aware, Hanoum, how clever we Turks have always been in getting out of difficulties with European Powers."

"And what about Germany," said I.

"No fear on that side, Germany is now our best friend, ready to help us in every way."

Poor, deluded people, they little knew how soon that Power would become their master and hasten on the ruin of their country.

I do not wish to include the uneducated people in this description of the aims of the Young Turkey Party. The country people are still in profound ignorance. They are an Allah-fearing people, and have remained content earning their daily bread by the sweat of their brow. Their wages allow them to have about two pence a day pocket-money, and in the evening after drinking a cup of coffee, eating a small quantity of their favourite yaghourt (soured milk), and smoking a few cigarettes, these hard-working toilers are ready to turn in and sleep peacefully till dawn without troubling their heads about politics or parties. Such at least were the Turks of my time.

I have no pretension to a spirit of prophecy, but when looking recently over a few notes I made in 1875, I came across this prediction. "Turkish affairs will never settle down until America comes forward." The brave American missionaries have done wonders for the Christian population in Turkey. The work has been able and tactful, and though opposed to the religious interests of the Turks, yet the Turks nevertheless highly respected these devoted servants of humanity, and often followed the advice they gave.

But to return to Salonika; a Squadron, under the command of Admiral Sir Michael Culme Seymour was eagerly welcomed by all classes, since its presence in the Bay of Salonika inspired a sense of great confidence and security. Outside this sense of security was a genuine feeling of admiration for the sea-power of England, and great regard and esteem not only for the gallant admiral, officers, and middies but also for the crews; and the Turks were pleased to be under the shelter of this great fleet, which compared so favourably with the fleets from other nations, and attracted the attention even of the ignorant at a time when the Turks were wont to say of their own ships, "Bizim ghemiler bir para etmezler" (Our ships are not worth a penny).

One late afternoon about this time I was going to the stable to give a bit of sugar to my favourite horse, when I was startled in the semi-darkness by a gigantic, dishevelled individual with a besmeared blackened face springing out of the coal-house which adjoined the stable. This man fell at my feet and implored me to save his life. Drawing him into the stable out of sight, I asked him who he was, and what the danger was that was menacing his life.

"I am the Hedjabachi (headman) of Cassandra," said he, "pursued by these dogs (meaning the Turks) for hiding arms on my estate, which I only have there in order to protect my family and my farm in case of necessity." Learning from him that this was the extent of his crime, and though feeling that the case was a delicate one, I sent him back to the coal-house to remain

there till I could find out if his story was based on fact. If it were I knew he was in danger of losing his life or of imprisonment, which was nearly as bad.

Fortunately there was a ball that evening, where I knew I should meet a great friend of ours, Redjeb Pasha, the Commander-in-chief of the Forces in Macedonia.

I decided not to say a word to my husband, but to make a direct appeal to the Commander-in-chief in favour of my friend in the coal-house.

I broached the subject with all the diplomacy in my power, and while watching his face I noticed on it looks of annoyance at being asked a favour beyond his official capacity to grant. This decided me to go straight to the point and ask him for the release of the man, and his help to get him out of the country. He stared at me, saying, "Great is the gravity of your request to me as Commander-in-chief of our Forces in charge of the protection of the country."

I answered smilingly that I knew that to be so, and that that was the very reason I made this request only to the kindness of his heart.

"Has Mr Blunt knowledge of this incident?"

"Certainly not," said I, "he would have been the first to place the man in your official hands, whilst I ignore your official position and prefer to appeal to the kindness of your generous heart."

"Be it so," answered my gallant friend, "I cannot refuse your appeal. Tell your protégé to be at your garden door about three o'clock in the morning, and when he hears three gentle taps to open it and go out, and follow a man who will

put him on board a Greek boat which will take him out of the country."

My husband was furious when I told him the story some weeks later, but I rejoiced to think that I had been able to save the life of an oppressed man who had only made reasonable preparations in case of an attack on himself and his property.

After the Squadron left my husband and I went to England on six months' leave. This was my husband's first visit to England since he had left it on the completion of his education thirty-five years previously, and he was like a schoolboy let loose in his happiness in returning to the dear land of his birth and boyhood. His first visit in London was to his club, the Athenæum, of which he had been a member for years, but had never previously had the chance to enter. I was favoured by fortune, for I had the privilege on the Kaiser's visit to the city of London of going to the club, too, and having a place on the balcony from which to view the procession. There were many celebrities at the luncheon which followed, and it rejoiced my heart to see that my husband, in spite of his long sojourn and anxious work in the Near East, looked the youngest of them all.

CHAPTER XVII

1891-1895

HAPPY as we had been at Villa Mon Plaisir, yet I was very glad on our return from England to move into the new Consulate, a spacious modern building on the Boulevard Hamidia. The picturesque Mount Hortiach which we saw from our windows often presented one of the finest atmospheric effects I have ever witnessed. The rays of the setting sun blended in some curious way with the soft dews rising from the mountain, and appeared to form an azure curtain floating in space.

Owing to the fact that we had insured our furniture in the old Consulate, we had money to invest in furniture from England and oriental stuffs from the Stamboul bazaar. This time, thanks to the aid of Jeanne's nimble fingers, I set up house more easily and quickly than I had ever done before. We had nearly finished arranging the dining- and living-rooms, leaving the ballroom to the last, when my husband received news of the early arrival of the Squadron; good news which rejoiced everybody in Salonika.

It was, I think, during the Cretan troubles that the British Squadron paid frequent visits to

Salonika under different commanders-in-chief, among whom were Admiral Sir George Tryon, Admiral Markham, and Prince Louis of Battenberg in H.M.S. *Cambrian*. I well remember the old friends who came back on this occasion, as we gave a house-warming dinner followed by a ball, when the ballroom, not yet complete, was temporarily decorated most prettily by some of our bluejackets. Poor Admiral Sir George Tryon attracted much attention by his personality and good looks as he stood by me watching the dancers. The Italian Consul came up and paid him so many compliments on his appearance as an admiral that as he left us Sir George turned round to me and said laughingly, "Pears' soap, Pears' soap."

A regatta took place before Admiral Tryon left, and I noticed with keen interest what a great event a regatta is both for the officers and the men. Sir George asked a large party from the shore, including His Excellency the Governor of Salonika, who was so pleased at the attention that he presented as a special prize a handsome set of gold and silver coffee cups. The prize was won by one of the Admiral's favourite middies, a most charming and promising young officer, and the Admiral asked me to thank the Governor for having given so valuable a prize, and to add that he was so pleased that one of his youngest officers had gained it as he would be likely to live long, and to bear in mind all his life His Excellency's kind gift. *L'homme propose mais Dieu dispose.* A fortnight later both the Admiral and his favourite young officer passed out of this finite world in consequence of the well-remembered sinking of the Admiral's ship, H.M.S. *Victoria* (1893),

during naval manœuvres. The brave young boy preferred to remain on the sinking ship to the very end by the side of his beloved chief, in spite of his chief's repeated permission to save himself. This calamitous loss of a number of brave officers and men was specially grievous to us since their recent visit was so fresh in our minds. A cloud of sorrow hung over Salonika for a time, and the deepest sympathy was felt for Lady Tryon. Much sympathy too was felt for our dear kind friend, Admiral Markham, who was well known as a very capable, brave, and distinguished officer.

Many men-of-war remained in the Bay of Salonika over a long period as a demonstration during the Armenian and Cretan troubles. Both these troubles were serious enough, God knows, but it has always been the Armenians who paid dearly. The custom of re-commissioning men-of-war every two years brought back to Salonika from time to time old friends and introduced new friends who, in due course, rose through the ranks of officers, from midshipmen to that of commander-in-chief, each standing on his own merits and steadily going up the rungs of the ladder of promotion. Jeanne asked one of the youngest of her friends what his feelings were whilst in charge of a boat full of bluejackets. "My feelings," said the bright little fellow, "are akin to those of an admiral fulfilling his duties, and," added he pleadingly, "please say something nice about me to my captain as I love him very much and I should like him to care for me." I thought this little speech a striking illustration of the harmony, respect, and good feeling that reigns on board these fine well-

disciplined ships down to the bluejackets who are, as a rule, proud of and devoted to their superior officers. Even the Turks, so differently brought up, were struck by the general good behaviour of our sailors. In the few instances when a complaint was brought to my husband of some foolish conduct on the part of a sailor, and his assurance that the case would be brought to the notice of the captain, he was thanked and was asked that the case might go no further on the plea that childish pranks in brave young men, though tiresome and reported to the Consul-General, did not deserve punishment. Some of the jokes played by a few mischief-loving sailors were most absurd. Again, it was a donkey that was made to play the chief rôle. A regie gardien (civil guard) was fast asleep whilst in his sentry-box. The sailor, seeing this, brought his donkey and gently put its head through the narrow window at the side of the sentry-box, so that it was more or less on a level with the face of the peaceful sleeper. The donkey, disapproving of its head in this position, gave utterance to a bray of distress. The guard, half asleep, became conscious of the donkey's head close to his own, thought it was some strange beast come to devour him and screamed for help at the top of his voice. The sailor, after enjoying his practical joke, came to the rescue, and after a good deal of trouble got the donkey's head out of its tight prison, and at the same time mollified his victim by placing a few shillings in his hand.

Another practical joke brought to my husband's notice was serio-comic. The victim was a devout Turk who had spread his handkerchief of prayer

facing Mecca, and with his face on his knees he bent on the ground and made his Namaz. Thus absorbed he attracted the attention of a bluejacket who approached from behind, seized the Turk by the legs, and made him turn three somersaults in succession, in spite of the Turk's protest at being disturbed in his devotions. The Turk's turban fell off, and his tormentor placed it on his own head and put his cap in exchange on the Turk. The poor Turk tried to persuade the sailor to give him back his turban as he abhorred looking like a ghiaour (infidel). After contemplating his handiwork the sailor put his hand in his pocket, took out a shilling and handed it to his victim with the turban, said, "Namaz great bosh. English shilling bono-bono. Good-bye."

"Allah, Allah soupan Allah" (God is great), said the Turk, but consoled by the look of the shilling he also agreed that it was *bono-bono.*

Entertainments of one kind and another continued to be given during the stay of the Squadron. M. Charnaud and Mr Allatini, the latter a well-known wealthy Jew, were both very hospitable people, and so were one or two of the foreign consuls. I must not forget to note down the hospitality of M. L——, a *nouveau riche,* a most avaricious Jew who, on hearing that Captain Lord Charles Beresford was reputed to be much the wealthiest of the officers, said, "Je dois prendre note de cela."

M. L—— gave a dinner, when great confusion ensued over the seating of the guests. The Commander-in-chief was passed over by the host in favour of Lord Charles, who was placed next

to Madame L——, a pretty young woman of European extraction. The two officers looked at each other. The younger in his delightful outspoken way said, "I beg your pardon, sir, but I had to sit where I was pressed down unceremoniously by the waiter."

We always had a little coterie of officers with us whenever a squadron was in the Bay, which gave us much pleasure and was one of the delights of the happy days in Salonika. Wit, youth, and gaiety, as well as the stately charm of the senior British naval officers often produced the effect of a Parisian *Salon de Conversation.* Every imaginable subject was discussed at one time or another, the older members looking all the younger, and the younger older and wiser when talking over some of the ways of life on land and sea. It was during one of these pleasant gatherings that a young officer in imitation of my nieces called me "Aunt Fanny." The happy inspiration was enthusiastically approved, and from that moment I was formally adopted as "Aunt Fanny" to the Navy. These dear "Extraordinary Nephews," as they called themselves, formed a small committee and only admitted to this relationship such further officers as they approved of, and this was kept up to very recent times. Among this first set of nephews were Admiral Sir Rosslyn Wemyss, and many others who have carved great careers for themselves, but who in those days were happy, light-hearted, yet earnest young officers. One generation of Extraordinary Nephews has followed the other, and all, according to their age, are

occupying positions of great importance. I am now at the fourth generation, and many of the youngest set have already distinguished themselves, and show me that they are following in the footsteps of their predecessors. On a cigarette box that some of the members of the first generation gave me are the names amongst many others of Allan F. Everett, Maurice Woollcombe, Mark Kerr, all now distinguished Admirals of the Fleet.

What makes me so proud and happy in the enjoyment of this great group of Extraordinary Nephews is the wealth of friendship and affection they so generously bestow upon me, and which I retain to the present day. Few, indeed, are those of my Extraordinary Nephews in the Mediterranean Navy who, passing through Malta, fail to come and see me, now pretty well known as "Aunt Fanny of the British Fleet."

Honi soit qui mal y pense.

CHAPTER XVIII

1895-1896

None of the countries I have visited can compare with Egypt in stimulating the desire to see and to know more of it. What can be more impressive than the Pyramids built of huge blocks of stone bearing the marks of bygone centuries? The wonderful Catacombs, the resting cities of the Pharaohs whose spirits are thought to hover in these their mysterious domains. The Colossal Sphinx presiding above, its wonderful eyes now no longer thought to have power to harm the dead or the living. The wide desert, that land of silvery sand and sunshine dotted here and there by the comforting presence of an oasis, and the possibility of at times contemplating across it the mysterious fleeting mirage. The expeditions on the blue waters of the Nile or to the ruins of some ancient temple. Egypt is rich in interests diverse enough to gratify every taste among the crowds that used yearly to resort there from all parts of the world, and is a country where old and modern civilisations often blend incongruously, such as the ancient custom of a donkey ride combined with the irresistible fun

of the cosmopolitan chatter of the fellahîn who takes charge of both the beast and its burden.

My interest in the land of the Pharaohs was greatly stimulated by the kind hospitality of my cousin, Sir Edward Zohrab, who had been a General in the Egyptian Army, and was at the time of my visit Under-Secretary of War. I was greatly attached to my cousin, whose fine qualities attracted me much, and I was much gratified to find that Lord Wolseley, whom I met in Malta some years back, shared my feelings. In talking of the Soudan campaign when he had seen much of my cousin, Lord Wolseley said, "In all my long experience of life I never came across any person I loved and admired as much as I did that dear good cousin of yours."

The season I spent at Cairo was a very lively one, and was made especially delightful for me as my dear son was quartered there with his regiment, the Connaught Rangers. It was at this time that I first met H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge, Lord Wolseley, General Kitchener, Slatin Pasha, and many other distinguished men. Balls and parties of every description were given; the two that have remained engraved on the tablets of my memory were the ball at the Ghezireh Palace given by the cavalry regiment stationed in Cairo, in honour of the Duke of Cambridge, and the dinner given by the Connaught Rangers. The ball was like a peep into fairyland. The vast terrace of the palace was hung with brilliant oriental draperies, their bright colours held here and there by gold and

silver roses that caught the reflection of thousands of lights. The garden, decorated in a similar way, its alleys perfumed by the rich scent of countless flowers, proved a serious rival to the attractions of the ballroom.

The Duke of Cambridge appeared to be deeply impressed by the lovely sight, and after looking all round asked me who had designed so beautiful a palace.

"I believe," said I, "that it was the creation of the Khedive Ismail in which to house his countless houris."

"It is a pity," said the Duke, "that there are none of them here to complete the tableau."

I demurred, and cast a look of admiration at the groups of lovely girls flitting in and out among the bushes. The old courtier guessed my thoughts, and, with a twinkle in his eye, said, "They are well represented but they lack the interest of novelty."

"An interest," added I, "which their rivals must certainly have introduced into the Mohammedan paradise."

The distinguished company, the brilliant uniforms, the excellent supper in these beautiful surroundings made a delightful luxurious entertainment which was said to have cost about £2000. The habit of extravagant waste of money introduced and practised by the Khedival family was easily caught by other than those of the Khedival household.

The grand dinner and ball of the Connaught Rangers was an annual affair given to celebrate some regimental victory. I was much interested

in the fine display of silver, the accumulated treasures of many years, on the dining-table. Colonel Brook commanded the regiment at that time. I was seated next to General Kitchener, who was much interested in the decoration I wore, which had been given me by Sultan Abdul Hamid for my work amongst Turkish women. The decoration is very beautiful and consists of a five-pointed star of red enamel on gold. The spaces between the points of the star are filled with gold crowns encrusted with diamonds and green enamel. The centre shows the Toughra or signature of the Sultan, surrounded by a green enamel band, on which are three words in Turkish characters in fine letters of gold, *i.e.*, Fidelity, Friendship, Valour.

Kitchener was at that time just beginning to be a rising star over which slight clouds occasionally passed, owing to some difference of opinion between him and his Commander-in-chief, which induced the future hero of England to go on a visit to Cyprus. Kitchener's return coincided with difficulties the French were making in the Soudan, causing annoyance to Lord Wolseley in consequence of certain vexatious criticisms cast on the English, which necessitated sending some able person to examine into and to report on them. The Commander-in-chief applied to my cousin to find the right person for the mission.

"I have him ready for your service, sir," said Edward.

"Who is it?" asked Lord Wolseley.

"Kitchener," was the reply.

"Look for some one else," said Lord Wolseley.

Next evening the same inquiry received the same reply, and it was only on the third day that my cousin's persistent recommendation of Kitchener appealed to Lord Wolseley, who, after taking a turn or two up and down the room, said curtly, "Tell him to come and dine with me to-night."

Edward told me this story and added, "As soon as I got the order I went off like a shot and spent seven hours on horseback trying to find Kitchener. At last I came across him and told him to hold himself in readiness to start next morning on a mission to the Soudan."

"To-morrow morning, by whose orders?" said Kitchener, with a pleased surprise.

"By order of the Commander-in-chief."

"Never, the man hates me like poison, and is not likely to wish to make use of my services."

"Never mind what you think, you are to come and dine this evening and receive your instructions for to-morrow."

It did not take Kitchener long to get to the bottom of this affair and to give an able and satisfactory report.

I believe it was Kitchener's successful conduct of this mission which cleared his sky from the cloud which had temporarily veiled it.

In spite of the fact that the case had been well sifted and reported on, yet the French press continued to cast unpleasant reflections on our policy in the Soudan. Again chance decided in Kitchener's favour. It happened that my cousin and the Editor of the *Times* were in Paris together, when the latter, anxious to get correct information on the subject to enable him to put a

stop to the outcry of the French papers, applied to Edward and learnt what he wanted from him. Kitchener on meeting Edward a little later spoke to him of the great change in the tone of the French press, and wondered who could have supplied such sound information to the *Times*.

"One of your friends, I expect," said Edward.

It apparently did not occur to Kitchener that it was Edward who had helped to confirm the soundness of his report, and thus further to establish the position he had won for himself.

Slatin Pasha, an officer in the Egyptian Army, was another of the interesting personages I met in Cairo. Slatin Pasha often came to my cousin's house, and his personality and conversation deeply interested me. He was an Austrian by birth, young, good-looking, and delicate in appearance. He had been Governor of the Province of Darfur when the Mahdist rebellion broke out, and was made prisoner and spent seven terrible years at Omdurman. It was a miracle how he managed to survive those long years of captivity. At one time he would be put in chains and nearly starved, and at another his position would be all that he could desire, good food, kind attention, and everything he needed when, without rhyme or reason, so far as he knew, he would again be put in chains and starved. After his escape in 1895 he told me that on his return to Austria he was amazed to find that he was the sole survivor of a small circle of friends he had left in good health, and whose lives had been lived, unlike his own, in uneventful, comfortable circumstances.

During my stay in Cairo I enjoyed the

privilege of meeting several distinguished members of the Khedival family, the descendants of Mehemet Ali, the first Khedive of Egypt.

Mehemet Ali was an Albanian born at Cavalla, where his father, a much respected citizen, had settled down, living quietly on his modest earnings. Mehemet Ali, a bright, handsome boy, was employed by Mr Chassaud, a British subject, a grain merchant, as kavass or guard. It was Mr Chassaud's son who told me the interesting details of the beginning of Mehemet Ali's wonderful career. It seems that the boy, full of life and energy, though illiterate and devoid of any means beyond his trifling salary, began to pine for some change to better his position, when fortunately he came across some Albanian adventurers on their way to visit their native land, who told him about the great country of Egypt they had just left, and of the frequent unexpected openings to make a fortune that occurred there, owing to the difficulties the Turks found in maintaining their control over the country. Mehemet Ali thought this over carefully, and made up his mind to get to Egypt by hook or by crook. Troubled by the want of means for his journey he appealed to his mother, who discouraged him as far as she could from undertaking so venturesome an enterprise, but seeing his fixed determination she at last took an old stocking from the bottom of her trunk and poured out her small savings into Mehemet Ali's hands. The amount was barely sufficient to pay for the journey to the great city of Stamboul, about which he had heard so much since childhood. Mehemet's father could not help him with money,

but gave him a suit of fine Albanian clothes and a set of arms worked in silver. These treasures were Mehemet's stock-in-trade when he set sail for Stamboul.

The adventurous boy was very hungry when he reached his journey's end, as he had spent his last piastre on food the previous night. On landing at the old bridge of Stamboul, he neglected his pangs of hunger by an effort of will, cast a gratified look on the fine figure he cut in his rich Albanian clothes, inquired his way to the great bazaar of Stamboul, and swaggered along the narrow streets, his hand on his yatagan. The presence of an armed Albanian, a stranger, striding along the bazaar looking into every saraff's (money-lender's) box, alarmed the timid Armenian occupants, most of whom he passed with a look of disdain. At last at the top of a small incline he came to a solitary saraff sitting behind his portable bank. Mehemet Ali stood in front of this saraff, looked him up and down, and then said, "Saraff Effendimis, I want you to lend me £50."

"Bash-ustune" (On my head your orders), answered the money-lender, outwardly polite, but inwardly quaking with fear, "the amount is at your service if you can leave a deposit."

"I have none to leave," said Mehemet, his hand on his yatagan. The Armenian cast an anxious look on the stalwart youth and made a timid proposal that an I.O.U would be necessary. Mehemet Ali, with a bitter smile, said, "I can neither read nor write, you must therefore give me the £50, and trust to my word of honour that some day I will repay you."

The saraff pulled out his drawer and counted out £50 to the stranger whose name even he did not know. Mehemet Ali with this sum in his pocket started on the remarkable career which enabled him finally to occupy the proud position of first Khedive of Egypt. He never forgot the saraff to whom he owed his start in life, and in due course sent three of his officers to Stamboul to search him out and bring him to Cairo. The saraff, who was in reality a wealthy banker, had forgotten the incident till recalled to his memory by Mehemet Ali who said, "I wish to reward you, and appoint you, Boghos, the head of the Financial Department in Egypt, and I feel confident it will prosper under your care." Boghos Bey was overpowered by this unlooked-for good fortune, but rose to the occasion and filled well the important position given to him, and enjoyed to the last his master's confidence. Mehemet Ali, though illiterate, had a good head on his shoulders and sound foresight. He liked the English and the French, and encouraged them in the capital of his creation, and was glad when it was suggested that an hotel (afterwards Shepheard's) should be built. But when it was desired to buy the land on which the hotel was to be built he felt some anxiety, and talked the matter over with his friend Canelli, and said, "You see, Canelli, I like the English and am glad to attract them into the country, but I dislike the idea of giving them the right to purchase land, being well aware of the English method of sending first missionaries, then traders, and then the army and navy to take possession

of the country. This is sure to happen sooner or later when Turkey goes to pieces, as she surely will." None of Mehemet Ali's successors was his equal in mind, power, or organisation. Each in his way had certain qualifications of bravery combined with marked defects, such as caprice, favouritism, and reckless generosity, with an excess of cruelty and oriental despotism.

The Khedive Ismail, the founder of Ismailia, during whose reign the Suez Canal was made by the engineering genius of M. le Baron de Lesseps, built the three fine bridges between Cairo and the island of Gezireh, as well as the museum. He laid out the beautiful garden of Ezebekieh and the zoological gardens, but came to grief, chiefly owing to his extravagance and ignorance of financial matters. Like most Orientals, Ismail loved gold, but did not attach much importance to paper money, of which, however, he issued a good deal, and used often to give away recklessly. One day he desired to give a large sum to a favourite, and ordered his treasurer to have ready £10,000 on the following day. The treasurer, well knowing the poverty of the Khedival purse and the Khedive's love of gold, arranged ten thousand bright Egyptian pounds on Ismail's table. The Khedive, startled by the sight of so fine a display of gold, asked what so large a sum was doing there.

"Effendimis, it is the £10,000 my lord ordered me to put at his disposal."

"By Allah," answered Ismail, "put it away, put it away," and casting a glance of gratification at the shining pieces he passed on quite forgetting,

as his wily treasurer intended he should, to give any orders concerning the gift he had promised.

Under the Turkish protectorate Egypt was going to rack and ruin, when Mehemet Ali came to the front and saved it from that curse which was fast draining the country of all its resources and carrying them off to Constantinople. But it was "out of the frying pan into the fire" under the Khedival rule. The oriental Grand Seigneur, unless he be a miser, is absolutely reckless in financial matters. He will squander all his ready cash and mortgage his property to usurers (Jews), who are careful not to press for payment of the interest until it reaches an amount beyond the power of the borrower to pay, when the property changes hands greatly to the disadvantage of the borrower.

My visit to Cairo came to an end with the outbreak of the war in the Soudan, when my son was sent up country in charge of a Maxim gun, a gun that had then only recently been introduced into warfare.

I took passage on a Khedival steamboat bound for Constantinople, and had for fellow passengers a group of pretty, bright princesses leaving Egypt on the plea that plague had broken out. These girls were under the care of a Khedival lady, and were intensely bored by the want of society on the boat. I found them pretty, talkative, and elegant. They spoke French and English fluently, as they had been brought up by European governesses. They hated their forced seclusion, and longed for the liberty and freedom that were denied them. It made my

heart bleed to see intelligent young women cut off from the pleasures and duties of life. I met some of these princesses a few months later at Constantinople, where they occupied a lovely palace overlooking the Bosphorus, and found them rather happier, as they were allowed a little more liberty to go about than had been permitted in Egypt. Some of them went to Europe soon after, and the first thing they did was to cast aside their veils and wear hats!

I remember during the eighties that a charming woman with a romantic history had come to spend some months at Salonika, where I became acquainted with her. She was a Circassian girl who had been sold when a mere child in the slave market at Constantinople, and had been bought by a sister of Mehemet Ali, a princess of the Khedival House who had married, but was childless. The little Circassian, Besimé by name, was dressed as a boy by her adopted mother and carefully educated. The child grew up to be a beautiful girl, and when some fifteen or sixteen years of age was present at one of the annual gatherings of Turkish ladies, given by the Sultan as father of the Empire, when all the ladies are unveiled. Little Besimé attracted the Sultan's attention and he desired her for his seraglio. The princess objected, but after endless talk and arrangements Mehemet Ali decided that the Sultan might have her if the ceremony of nikiha or marriage was performed. This is a very rare ceremony, and I believe the case of Besimé was only the second that had occurred in the history of the Turkish Empire. After

occupying an important rôle as sultana for some years, she became impatient of the impediment to her free development, and tired of the jealousies and intrigues of a household of seven hundred women who had nothing to do but gossip, broke away from the Court. The Sultan provided her with a large fortune, but this she soon squandered away, oriental fashion. Besimé was still young and beautiful when I knew her, and she often came and lunched with us unveiled, when my husband and I enjoyed her interesting conversation. After lunch she would come into my boudoir and tell me of all the sorrows of her adventurous life. I wrote down a good deal of what she told me of the life and surroundings of an oriental Sultan. The seraglio was practically a little town with everyone in it devoted to the interests of one man, the Sultan ; but unfortunately all my notes were destroyed by the great fire which burnt down the Consulate.

This story of Besimé is in marked contrast to that of Zulfica, a real blossom of the desert who came down to the banks of the Nile with her water-pot on her head, her slim figure upright, and her baby clasped in her arms. After filling her water-pot and placing it in the shade of a palm tree she entered the river and dipped herself and her baby in the blue waters, then stood for a few moments on the bank smothering the child with her kisses. All this time she was noticed by an unseen watcher, who followed her home and made inquiries in her village as to who she was. Finding she lived with her father, and that she had but recently lost her husband in the

war, the unseen watcher, a prince of the Royal House, begged her in marriage and took her home, where she became the chief wife of a truly devoted husband. Egypt and Turkey are full of romantic stories, but the greater number of them develop into sadness or tragedy as the years roll on.

CHAPTER XIX

1897

I HAD an uneventful journey to Salonika, and arrived in good time to help my husband organise some fêtes in honour of Queen Victoria's jubilee (1897). The Italian Fleet was in the Bay at that time, which gave additional animation to our festivities. We had an At Home for all the children, who were delighted by the novelty of the entertainment, and were further gratified by carrying home mementos of the great Queen of England. In the evening we had a large garden party in the public gardens which went off well, in spite of the difficulty of illuminations owing to the scanty allowance of £10 accorded by the Foreign Office for this purpose. My husband considerably supplemented this sum from his own pocket and did not, as did another consul, put the Foreign Office to the expense of spending £100 in telegrams in discussing with it his inability to do justice to his Queen and country by a meagre dole of £10 for illuminations.

It is nineteen years since I left Salonika, and I often wonder how much has been left of the old town and its well-to-do inhabitants. I hope it will remain as it now stands by its birthright,

part of the renewed, purified, and consolidated Greece under the firm, honest control of M. Venizelos, that patriotic genius whose short tenure of office as Prime Minister gave such solid proofs of his great capacity for organisation and reforms. The speedy manner in which he purged the whole country from the curse of brigandage, using moral pressure far more than the severe hand of the law, was a proof of his knowledge of how to handle men and matters. The success of M. Venizelos in this as in several other reforms is little known outside Greece, but so greatly increased his popularity there that had circumstances been more favourable to his noble task he would have saved his country from the trouble she has had through the treachery of an alien king, and of a few thousands of unpatriotic Greeks who, brought up on German intrigues and fed by German money, were led to become the partisans of Germany. These Greeks pressed the nation by every means in their power to follow the evil example which has led Greece to ruin, and has given her a bad reputation amongst her oldest and best friends, France and England. However doubtful and unpropitious the relations of Greece may still appear to be, there is every hope in the formation of a new Greece reformed and ready to expiate her past errors under the guidance of M. Venizelos, should his life be spared to accomplish the task he has taken upon himself. The thousands of Greeks, too, who languish under the despicable Turkish rule must, ere long, wake up to the necessity of union with the mother country. Whatever the

defects of the Greeks may be they have been acquired by the force of circumstances only, whilst the virtues of a nation, like those of individuals, are inherited gifts which are passed on from one generation to another. The Greek nation has preserved a number of virtues, little known outside their own people, which are held sacred to the present day in spite of the hardships that some of them impose on individuals. Few persons have had the opportunity of seeing and studying the soundness and patriotism of the Greek home life. The father, respected and venerated, as a rule exercises full power over the whole family, and does his best for the education and prosperity of his children who are generally clever and enterprising. When the father retires from his business his sons take on their shoulders the sacred duty of working on behalf of dowerless sisters, and do not themselves marry until a dower has been provided and a husband and home secured for their sisters. I have known of Greeks even in good but not lucrative positions who have abandoned everything they possessed in favour of their sisters, and have gone abroad to earn a livelihood. No sons, on the death of their father, touch the property should any be left; it goes to the mother and her daughters. In times of trouble Greeks are helpful to one another; there is a great deal of kindness and generosity in their nature mixed up with a great amount of pride and conceit. The Greeks under the Turks, by force of circumstances, are not always as honest with strangers as they might be; but in spite of defects of this kind the Greeks

are by far the most advanced and clever of all the races under the Turkish rule, and are the most adaptable to modern civilisation. These are some of the reasons why, in my humble opinion, I look upon modern Greece, not only as a progressive nation which will in time acquire influence in the Near East, but with her important maritime positions, her excellent seaports, and her army and navy, she should become an ally of considerable value to both England and France. These, no doubt, are problems reserved for the future when Germany is forced to accept the inevitable, and ceases to try to realise her dream of conquering the world.

I was in Athens in 1888 on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the coronation of the late King George of Greece, when I found the town full of joyful animation. His Majesty, a kindly, sensible king, had earned the confidence and affection of the whole nation. At that time there was no German influence in the air, Greece and her people were united and happy. I remember that even the Turks on that occasion seemed full of goodwill towards their Majesties, and gave a dinner in their honour. The funny part of these entertainments was that my nephew, who was Secretary to the Turkish Legation, and Riza Pasha, the son of Raouf Pasha our great friend, who was the Turkish Minister, asked me to help them to arrange the Legation for the dinner. To my dismay I found the place as bare as a Turk's shaved head, but fortunately good old Mr Canelli, a Salonika friend, whose guest I was at Athens, allowed me to borrow

a great deal of his lovely furniture, and the Legation was soon transformed into a beautifully furnished place, so much so that on the day following the dinner the Athens papers were full of praise for the Sultan of Turkey, for sending such beautiful furniture to Athens in honour of the occasion. T.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh and Prince George were present at the dinner and ball, and the Greek and English Royal families appeared much pleased at the success of the entertainment. I enjoyed it all, as well as the ball given by the Queen of Greece. It was a great pleasure to me to have the honour of again meeting the Duke of Edinburgh and our charming young Prince, and other friends in their *entourage.*

I felt much gratified to find the vast progress Athens had made after her liberation from the ruinous Turkish yoke. At the time of my first visit some half century previously, the population had appeared to consist of depressed, unkempt people from all parts of Turkey who bore the traces of their past serfdom. Athens was only just beginning to show something of her old beautiful self—many of her ancient monuments still lay half buried in the dust, and wholesale robberies of some of her treasures had been committed.

At this last visit my interest in the Schliemann collection of treasures, which had been deposited in the museum at Athens, was heightened by my stay at Troy some years previously.

Smyrna was one of the old cities on the shores of the Mediterranean that I visited several times,

and which I always found interesting. Smyrna with its fine position and its close proximity to Ephesus with the old church of St John the Divine, the most important centre of Byzantine orthodoxy, had always attracted many Greeks and foreigners since it had been granted certain privileges by various sultans with regard to life and property. British traders began to go to Smyrna in the seventeenth century, and flourished and developed into a wealthy colony, who carried on their business in the town and had pleasant country-houses in its vicinity. I do not remember ever hearing that Smyrna had been subject to any of the massacres on the part of the Turks during the war of Greek independence, when the Turks chopped off heads whenever they had a chance. Smyrna, however, had her troubles with the barbarous people farther in the interior, some of whom, like the Albanians, lived on loot, and occasionally came in bands to Smyrna and its environs, carrying off property or hostages. The situation improved after the construction of the railway between Smyrna and Aïdin. Dr Freshfield, if I remember rightly, had a good deal to do with the building of the railway, as he loved the country not only for its interesting old Byzantine churches, but as the birthplace of his beautiful young wife, Miss Zoë Hanson. My husband was distantly connected with the Hansons, and received much kindness from them when he was a student at Smyrna College. I became acquainted with old Mr and Mrs Hanson when going to England as a young girl, and I shall never forget the impression they made on

me, nor the charm and beauty of their only daughter. She and I met again years afterwards when we were both married, and both she and her husband were very kind to me whenever I went to England. She died when still comparatively young, and was buried in the lovely church in Surrey dedicated to "The Wisdom of God," which Dr Freshfield built not far from his house, and to which he presented marbles from the church of St John at Ephesus and from the monastery of St John Studium at Constantinople.

Some distance from Smyrna was a district inhabited by some semi-savage tribes such as the old Turkomans, the Zeibëeks, Kurds, Lazes, and Bektashis. The Bektashis are an order of Dervishes who live under the control of a chief of their own selection. The chief, who wears a large and distinctive badge of office round his neck, directs all the worldly affairs of the tribe. As a child I heard Mr Versami, the then ruling chief, relate to my mother his experiences. As a young man he came across a property belonging to the Bektashis near Smyrna which pleased him and which he rented and farmed. The tribe was kind to him and he helped them, and after a time they selected him as their chieftain. All was friendship and harmony between the chief and his subjects till one fine day, whilst all the community was at service in the Mosque, Versami's herd of pigs got loose and stampeded into the Mosque, and made noisy if not sweet sounds by their grunts and snorts. The devotees, surprised on their knees, were horrified to feel the unclean beasts lick their bare feet. Disgusted and infuriated they rushed at the chief

intent on removing his badge of office, when Versami stood up, clasped the badge firmly in his hands, and in a stern voice called out, "Stop, you ignorant fools, can you not see that there must have been a visitation of Shaitans (evil spirits) on our peaceful community, which Providence in his mercy has driven into these vile beasts to punish them before the day fixed for their execution, and in the form of these unclean creatures they have rushed into this sacred building to acknowledge their acceptance of our true faith before they meet their doom."

"Is that so!" said the Bektashis.

"It is," answered Versami, with a show of handing over his badge. "Take this much-honoured badge back if you do not believe me."

His protest was drowned by a general, "Hasha, hasha, Effendim" (Never, never, Effendim); and thus ended the threatened rebellion.

Perhaps one of the most interesting things at Smyrna was the tribe of the Mamouni, a Jewish sect which originated at Smyrna but was transferred to Salonika. A Jew named Sabatay Zevy rose to great eminence owing to his learning and eloquence, but since no one can be a prophet in his own country, his brethren persecuted him and had him arrested by the Turkish authorities who sent him to Constantinople. The then reigning Sultan had heard of Sabatay as a prophet and questioned him on his power and capacity. Sabatay did his best to stand firm on his own ground; but when the Sultan informed him that the termination of his earthly existence had already been settled, and that he would be decapitated the next day, Sabatay

was nonplussed and fell at the feet of the Sultan and declared himself a true believer of Islamism. Thereupon he left Constantinople and worked his way to Salonika, openly proclaimed himself as a convert to Islamism, but privately represented himself to his own community as a prophet and reformer of Judaism. His success was wonderful, especially among the Jewish women who followed him and worshipped him, tearing their hair and their clothes in frantic enthusiasm. Most of the dogmas and religious ceremonies ordained by Sabatay were based on the teaching of the Old Testament, and were carefully carried out by the community in secret whilst they openly frequented the Moslem mosques. One night in the year was set aside as a selection meeting, but small as their community was, schisms arose and they divided into three branches. No marriage out of their order was ever allowed to take place. Children were formally affianced at birth and these vows were never broken. None of the womenkind ever left Salonika, but the men were free to go where they liked or their interests demanded. There was, according to the written instructions left by Sabatay on his death, a room always ready for his ever-expected return, and one of the faithful watched by the entrance gate of the town every night to receive him. The women of the community were hysterical to the highest degree. My doctor and some of his colleagues assured me that when one of the women went off into a fit of hysteria the whole street followed suit. As a race these people were neither handsome nor sympathetic, but they were clever and open to all modern

ideas. They were charitable to each other to the extent of always supporting and setting right the economic position of any of their members who needed help. This sect had much influence with the Young Turkey Party, and it was due to one or more members of the Mamouni community who entered the Imperial Palace at Constantinople that the dethronement of Sultan Abdul Hamid was eventually brought about.

CHAPTER XX

I MADE one of my many journeys to Constantinople on board a Russian ship, and I was glad to do this since Russian vessels at that time rarely visited Salonika. The captain, a refined looking man, who spoke French perfectly, impressed me as being a good naval officer. The few first-class passengers appeared to be Orthodox devotees going to Mount Athos to expiate their sins, and to take the vow of celibacy on becoming monks in the huge Russian monastery. There was as well a considerable number of beggarly looking creatures, fine men, but unkempt and unwashed, closely grouped together on a lower deck, counting their beads, muttering prayers, and drinking tea out of a huge kettle that frequently made the round of the group when each man took a sip or two. I could not help watching these savage looking creatures at their meals. Each man carried a greasy bag which contained a coarse-looking bread and some small dried fish, and turned the contents of his bag on to the skirt of the long robe he wore, his lap serving as a plate, and ate ravenously of the simple fare which was washed down with more tea from the kettle. I must say it somewhat disgusted me to see such a fine, strong set of

human beings living in such a manner, but evidently they formed a realistic picture of the Russian Moujik of that time.

We were to stop at the Holy Mountain, Mount Athos, that hill of monasteries of the Orthodox Church where no female creature of any kind, not even a hen, is ever allowed to land.

Mount Athos is the easternmost of three promontories which project from Thrace into the Ægean Sea, and it is here that Orthodox Monasticism continues to exist as in medieval times. The first monastery is believed to have been built by the Empress Helen, mother of Constantine the Great. In course of time Mount Athos became a famous resort for pilgrimages for all the nationalities professing the Orthodox creed. Of the twenty monasteries on Mount Athos seventeen belong to Greece and one each to Russia, Serbia, and Bulgaria. The moral and religious influence of the Holy Mountain continues to be very great over Greece and Russia. The wealthiest and finest monasteries belong to those two countries, especially to Greece. The Grecian monasteries made their submission to Mohammed II. before the conquest of Constantinople, and obtained from him a Firman which secured them many privileges. The Russian monastery up to a late date was richly subsidised by the Russian Government, and received as well, valuable gifts in money and in kind from distinguished Russians.

The rules followed in the monasteries were instituted by St Basil. The monks are divided into two main classes, one in which they live in community under an abbot and abstain from flesh

all the year round, the other in which asceticism is less severe and the monks are directed by two or more presidents.

All the monasteries possess some precious relics. Some relate to the Nativity, others to the death of our Saviour, others again relate to the Virgin Mary. Some monasteries in addition have relics of the apostles and saints, which are treasured and venerated for the miracles they are said to have performed. Besides these sacred treasures many of the monasteries possess valuable gems, gold and silver objects, as well as priceless old manuscripts, books, and pictures, the collection of many centuries. Nothing leaves the Holy Mountain except the souls of the departed monks. All their worldly goods go further to enrich the monasteries.

The Russian monastery is said to give shelter to many old soldiers who become monks, and who are well furnished with arms in case of need. Even the rocky grottos of the solitary monks who live on the summit of the Holy Mountain are ornamented with arms that helped to drive away the Turks in former days. It is to be hoped that no renewal of such attacks will be attempted by the Turks and their associates the Huns at this time, for, though Mount Athos could no doubt be well defended by its soldier monks, yet the infernal high explosives of modern warfare might greatly damage this sacred old hill to which so many Christians have dedicated their lives and property.

In spite of the fact that the Empress Helen built and endowed the first retreat on Mount Athos, yet the laws of St Basil decreed with a

quaint lack of humour that no female of any kind be allowed on the Holy Mountain. St Basil's ruling is, however, powerless over the ubiquitous flea, and the monks and their attendants battle with large family parties of these small but determined invaders with beautifully carved long-handled weapons (scratchers) with which they chase or kill the greedy little pests.

As we neared the port of Mount Athos the bells of the twenty monasteries began to ring in honour of the new arrivals on board the ship.

The captain soon cleared out his devout passengers, and as he turned round to say "Au revoir" to me before he landed for a visit to the Russian monastery, I said, "Excuse me, Captain, but I intend to accompany you on shore."

He stared at me in amazed surprise and said, "Impossible, Madame, impossible, cela ne peut se faire. Ce que vous me demandez, Madame, est contraire aux règlements de ces saints lieux qui defendent à tout être de votre sexe humain ou animal de pénétrer par égard au salut de l'âme des moines."

I smiled, feeling sure that he did not believe a word of what he told me and said, "Monsieur le Capitaine, chaque règle peut avoir son exception. Je suis certaine que cette exception sera faite en votre faveur, vue l'importance que votre arrivée vient de causer. Quant aux injures à ma personne j'en prends la responsabilité."

He shrugged his shoulders, saying, "Soit, Madame, je ne suis pas responsable pour la reception que vous aurez."

I consequently followed his steps and came

face to face with a party of venerable monks who were horror-stricken on seeing a lady land. After they had saluted the captain the monks sharply turned back carrying him off. I stood for a few seconds uncertain whether to go back to the ship or to face the unpleasant ordeal of being turned into a pillar of salt, a superstition of what would happen to any woman who ventured on to Mount Athos, which was firmly believed by that ignorant community. I decided to risk the calamity, and followed the captain and his friends at a little distance up to their monastery. Before the party entered the gates one or two monks cast a scathing look at me and then disappeared. I wandered on, charmed with the beauty of the lovely site the selfish monks had appropriated to themselves. Some of the monasteries appeared to be hanging in mid-air since they were built on isolated blocks of rock, others were built on patches of fertile soil and peacefully reposed on Nature's bright green and flowery carpets, while fine old trees of every kind gracefully swayed their branches in the refreshing breeze. I felt deeply impressed by the stillness and the beauty of the surroundings as I walked upwards towards the part where the monks of solitary order lived in caves and sheltered nooks by themselves, and for themselves, in expiation of their past sins, and who from time to time peeped from under their cowls to contemplate a world they had vowed to give up with all its joys, sorrows, and vanities. A few jackdaws moped about chased by some wretched dogs equally condemned to celibacy. Absorbed by these sights which interested me much, I did not

notice that I had reached the gate of another monastery, when I was startled by the sudden appearance of a rather wild-looking monk who stared at me, repeatedly crossed himself, and in a menacing frantic voice of horror exclaimed in Greek,—

"Ποία εἶσαι κόρη τοῦ Σατανᾶ; ἀπό ποῦ ἔρχεσαι καί τί ζητῆς εἰς τό ἱερόν αὐτό μέρος; Καί αὐτή ἡ μήτηρ Εὔα δάν θά ἐτόλμα νά παρουσιασῆ ἐδῶ. Φύγε ἀμέσως πειρασμέ διότι διά τῆς παρουσίας σου ταράττεις τήν ἡσυχίαν τοῦ εἰρηνικοῦ αὐτοῦ κοινοβίου τό ὁποίον περιεφρόνησε τά ἀγαθά τοῦ κόσμου ὅλα καί τάς ἁμαρτίας ποῦ τό φύλον σου παρασύρει τοὺς ἀνθρώπους. Φύγε ἀμέσως πρίν μέ ἀναγκάσης. νά σοῦ καταρασθῶ καί σέ μεταβάλω εἰς στήλην ἅλατος."

"Who are you, daughter of Satan, where do you come from, and what do you want on this sacred spot? Mother Eve herself would not have dared to show her face here. Go away at once, you temptress, disturbing as you do by your presence this peaceful, holy community which has renounced the world and all the sins your sex might lead it to commit. Get away at once before you provoke me to utter the curse that will surely turn you into a pillar of salt."

"Thank you, father," said I, "for your unchristian sentiments and your inhospitable wish to turn me into a pillar of salt. Do not forget in case your curse has its desired effect to taste a bit of the salt, as salt is the savour of life."

"Φυγε ἁμαρτωλή κόρη τοῦ Σατανᾶ, φύγε."

"Go, go," said he again, "temptress, daughter of Satan," and with this he covered his eyes with his very dirty hands.

I hastened away really alarmed by his frantic speech. On my way down I met other monks who all crossed themselves and looked askance at me but made no ill-natured remarks. On the contrary, some of them who were returning from the ship where they had been with some small goods such as crosses, beads, and badges to sell to the passengers, stopped me and asked me to buy some of their things. I bought a few trifles, thinking to myself of the power money exercises over the world. I walked towards the port, and felt very pleased to meet my captain who was anxiously looking out for me and who said, "Ah, Dieu merci, je suis heureux de vous retrouver."

"Mais pas en bloc de sel," said I laughingly.

"Il a fallu être Anglaise pour avoir ainsi bravé le danger," answered he, adding, "Now, Madam, that your curiosity has been gratified and your presence representing the dreaded and forbidden sex has put this holy place topsy-turvy, the sooner we get on board and leave the better."

"Do you mean, Captain, that that mountain of cargo on deck has already been landed and housed in the cellars of your monastery?"

"Yes," said he, "it consists of foodstuffs for the abstemious occupants."

"Of course," added I, with a certain amount of malice, "it must have been very light if it consisted of dry fish such as I noticed some of your passengers ate."

He gave me a sharp look, and with no further interruption on the way beyond the presence of a few more monks who also wished me to buy some of their trifles, we got on board and proceeded to

Constantinople where the kind, pleasant captain dropped me and continued his journey across the Black Sea.

On the whole I considered this trip as the most interesting I had ever made. I felt gratified at having been one of the only two women who have ever landed on Mount Athos. Lady Stratford de Redcliffe with the help of her husband had visited Mount Athos in spite of protests and opposition from the monks. I had succeeded merely on the strength of my moral courage in imposing my wish on the good captain. The captain told me that this most powerful old resort of Orthodoxy in the Near East, which had played a great rôle after the conquest of the Byzantine Empire, continued to exercise up to the present time a powerful influence among all the races of the Orthodox faith. The importance of Mount Athos, though not political, has been most useful in the practical sense, as it has for ages kept open the doors of its monasteries as a harbour of refuge to great and small notabilities. Most of the Russian monks had formerly been soldiers, and the yearly cargo which reached Mount Athos and was consigned to the Russian monastery without passing the custom-house, did not consist of dried fish but of arms of all kinds.

In conversation with the captain, I heard a good deal of his country and its people before the liberation of the serfs. He described Russia as a limitless land rich in natural wealth of every kind. The people, ignorant and uncultured, were ruled by a small section of educated people who formed a highly despotic government. He thought that

when the people began to grow and develop Russia would be split into many factions, and that it would take a long time and need many sacrifices before she would pull herself together and form a nation in harmony with the other Great Powers. I sometimes wonder if this long-sighted captain is still alive to witness the chaotic state of his country at the present time.

CHAPTER XXI

1897

The Greco-Turkish War broke out in 1897 at the time that Greece was frantic over the desperate position of her Cretan brethren, and the European Powers hesitated to take any active action to prevent the massacres organised by Sultan Hamid's agents. The patriotic association in Greece, the "Ἐθνικὴ Ἑταιρεία" or National Committee, decided to send a body of troops to Crete and to declare war against Turkey, in spite of the fact that neither the King nor the nation at large approved of the step. In the meantime, the European forces which began to pour into Crete remained inactive, owing to the cunning Sultan's diplomatic double game, till the appalling massacres occurred, when many unfortunate Christian families, among whom the wife and child of Mr Kalokerinos, the British Agent, and other members of his family, were ruthlessly murdered. I do not intend to enter into the details of the Greco-Turkish War, and shall only state a few matters connected with Salonika and relate some of the rumours that reached us from the seat of war. Neither Greece nor Turkey was prepared for war, least of all the latter, whose

forces were scattered all over the countries comprising the Sultan's Empire. When the town criers in Salonika called out the news that war had been declared between Turkey and Greece it took the people by surprise. The impression of unpreparedness of both countries was prevalent; but the news proved to be true, and shortly afterwards 50,000 Turkish troops landed at Salonika destined for Thessaly. It is only right, in justice to these troops, to state that there was not a single case of disorder or theft reported against them, in spite of the fact that all essentials as regards clothing, commissariat, and medical care were absent. I do not know the number of the Greek forces in Larissa under Prince Constantine that the Turks were to meet, but judging by the reports that reached Salonika the battle could not have been serious, since the Prince was reported to have left the camp at the approach of the enemy forces, a fact which made so bad an impression in Greece that the Prince found it necessary to leave the country for a considerable time.

Great dismay was caused among the Turkish authorities on hearing that the Greek Fleet was seen outside the Bay of Salonika. The Turkish Commander-in-chief, who called on us the following morning, assured us that he had not closed his eyes for three nights, since the entrance to the Bay was undefended and the Greek Fleet could have come in and taken possession of Salonika without firing a gun.

The dismay subsequent to the declaration of war was still greater among the Hellenic subjects

in Macedonia, then under the dominion of the Turks, owing to the brutal conduct of the Turkish authorities in driving the unfortunate people out of their homes down to the seashore, where they hoped, but vainly, to find ships to take them to Greece. My husband as usual was the first to take up the case of these destitute refugees and went to the Governor, Riza Pasha, a kindly humane man, who greatly helped to modify the situation until boats could come from the Piræus to take them away.

About half a dozen English war correspondents turned up at Salonika with extraordinary rapidity. They were Mr Bigham, son of Mr Justice Bigham (now Lord Mersey), who represented the *Times* and was a bright, clever youngster ; Mr Stevenson, whose untimely death was, I believe, a great loss to the literary world, owing to his many gifts and his distinguished personality, as well as Mr Gwynne and one or two more, who must have made their mark, as they were all clever, gifted men. The first to reach Salonika was Mr Bigham at about 3 A.M. one morning. He drove straight to the Consulate and insisted on seeing my husband. The kavass said he did not think his master would care to come down and see a visitor at so unusual an hour. Mr Bigham sent up a message to my husband, who replied, "Ask the gentleman to come upstairs," forgetting that I was in bed not far off. But the kavass had already gone with the message, and I had only time to jump out of my nice warm bed and go behind a curtain, where I was kept for at least twenty minutes, while Mr Bigham discussed with

my husband the necessity of his obtaining a permit from the Governor in order to pass the frontier. "Well," said my husband, amused at the persistence of his visitor, "all I can do for you is to give you a kavass to show you the way to the Governor's house." "Thank you, sir," said young Bigham, beaming with delight, "I think I can manage the rest." And he did, for he got the Governor out of his bed and obtained the permit he wanted. The next time the Governor met my husband he said, "What extraordinary people the English must be, if all are as persistent as the friend you sent me, who would not take 'No!' for an answer, but turned me out of my bed and made me do as he wished." I got to know Mr Bigham better when later on he stayed with us on his return from the seat of war, when I told him of the unpleasant twenty minutes he had given me. He expressed his regrets, but said that it had been worth a fortune to him as it had enabled him to get several hours ahead of his colleagues, so that he had had the privilege of sending the earliest war news home. All the English correspondents came in a body to see me when they returned to Salonika. They were not only unshaved but their beards were long and they wore wonderful costumes of Greek capes, red Turkish belts, and dust-covered clothes, so that I hardly knew one from the other. They were evidently well pleased with themselves, for they jokingly asked me to go for a walk with them. I flatly refused, saying I had no wish to exhibit myself in the company of half a dozen outlandish looking men, but I would gladly go if they made

themselves presentable. Most of this interesting group of men remained about a week in Salonika, discussing the past, present, and future of Greece with surprisingly good knowledge and clear insight, especially with regard to Macedonia. They were greatly surprised that neither the Cretan troubles nor the Greco-Turkish War made the Macedonian Greeks give the slightest sign of desiring to take any part with their countrymen in fighting the Turks. Well acquainted as I was with the ideas and aspirations of the Macedonian Greeks, since I often discussed the subject with the patriotic set, I knew they had all agreed that a rising of the Macedonian Greeks would have been unwise and useless, likely to lead to great disaster, since the movement started in Greece had no serious foundation, but was the outcome of the Ἐθνικὴ Ἑταιρεία, National Committee, which was composed of hot-headed men. At the same time rumours were afloat that Germany probably had a hand in the matter, in order to push forward her projected influence in Greece. The Greeks, far from being ready for war themselves, made no sign to their Macedonian brethren to come and help them, and these latter made no move all the time the Turkish army was present. Even the peasants in mixed villages (Turks and Greeks) went on peacefully working in the fields. The Turks, on the other hand, were pressing in from all directions to join the army on the march, though the army lacked the principal necessaries, which, however, were said to be following on from Constantinople in readiness for the great battle, which was, I believe, to be fought at Volo.

When the battle was fought there was little damage to either side. These facts are gathered from the Greek Archbishop at Salonika, whose confidence I enjoyed as to what was going on in Macedonia.

The Turks brought in about three score prisoners with a certain display of satisfaction, leading them through the main street of Salonika on their way to be incarcerated in the White Tower. I happened to be walking in that direction when I noticed the procession of prisoners followed by a rabble of Jews, jubilant and noisy, and making insulting remarks regarding the prisoners, At that very moment the coupé of the Governor, who was a very little man, drove up, and as he came face to face with the prisoners and the crowd he got out of his carriage, spat once or twice into the palms of his hands, took a firm hold of the heavy stick he was carrying, and suddenly appeared to be transformed into a giant as he struck out right and left with force and precision on the backs of the Jews. Howls and screams ensued, and "A Dio Signor del Monde!" was called out by one and all. The cries could be heard at the end of the street, but did not last long, as the crowd quickly dispersed and disappeared.

Later on, in 1912, the taking of Salonika by the Greeks entirely altered the situation. Prince Constantine in the subsequent war entirely redeemed his military reputation and became a great favourite in Greece, until on succeeding his worthy father, King George, he allowed himself to fall under the damaging influence of Germany,

when he ruined his own cause as well as that of Greece.

The war came to an end through England's political pressure and her practical assistance. England lent Greece four millions at two per cent., in order that she might settle the claims of Turkey. The war was inglorious except for Koutsflena, a Greek village of a thousand inhabitants, which happened to be planted on the old Turco-Greek frontier and remained under Turkish dominion. The inhabitants of this village, all Greeks, wisely razed their village to the ground and burnt every vestige of it and rebuilt it in Greek territory.

The Near East question is so far-reaching, important, and dangerous that unless carefully revised and placed on a sound basis within a short time trouble will break out once more. May God help the people directly concerned.

Neither friends nor adversaries can put any confidence in Bulgarian promises or written conventions, for, if convenient to themselves, they will consider them worthless and of no consequence. The Bulgarians, such as I knew them, were a hard-working people, grasping and greedy for extension of territory. They understand the advantage to be derived from large homesteads, and whilst other races have to dower their young daughters when giving them in marriage, the Bulgarian father keeps his daughters at home as long as possible to cultivate the soil, and when he has to part with them it is the affianced husband who gives a dower to his future father-in-law before he can claim his bride. The Bulgarian will be found to be a tough element to deal with unless all his teeth are drawn.

Justice and generosity do not appeal to him. He neither practises them nor understands them. The Turks, who formerly lorded it over them, ordered that their heads should be shaved, except for one long tuft of hair, which must appear through a hole in the top of their sheepskin caps. This tuft of hair was used by the Turks as a handle to shake them into obedience. I much fear the indulgence of the Entente towards them will make matters very difficult to bring into line, and the sooner the Dedeagatch railway is taken out of their power the better.

The well-known inconsequent ways and dealings of the Turks, added to their late tuitions under their masters, the Huns, are sure further to complicate matters. I am sure that half measures with Turks and Bulgarians will be found in the long run to be as bad as no measures at all.

But to return to Macedonia and the problem as regards the future. I learn on good authority that the whole country is clamouring to be placed under the suzerainty of Great Britain. The English, the Macedonians declare, are the only good, generous, humane people. "The French and Italians may be good and great in their way," say they, "but they look on us as unfortunate, debased people, whilst the English respect us and show us their sympathy. Nor is there need to mention the way in which they treat our womenkind. With us our maidens are kind, pleasant, and moral in their behaviour, and therefore the saying has arisen that to be gentle and well-behaved is to be like a girl. So strongly has the good behaviour of the English soldiers impressed

itself on us that when they are seen marching through the country it is no uncommon thing for the peasants to leave their work in the fields while they watch the soldiers, and to hear them call out, since it is the highest praise they can give the soldiers, 'The girls are passing! The girls are passing!' When French and Italian troops are passing no such praise is forthcoming; on the contrary, the girls and women run away and hide themselves."

This sentiment is so general in Macedonia that Mr Repoulis, the Vice-President of Greece, mentioned it in a speech in the Chamber.

Macedonia is a wealthy country, and great, I believe, will be the future of its capital, Salonika, if, helped by fortune, it falls under the administration of a good and wise government. The Greeks, Turks, Jews, and Europeans of all nationalities would then be free to develop, unhindered by political intrigues or national upheavals.

I wish the dear old country all success and prosperity.

CHAPTER XXII

1898

It was after the short Greco-Turkish War and the rumours of a rising in Macedonia, and soon after the massacres in Crete in 1898, that Jeanne and I went to Kandia to spend a few weeks with my son, who was A.D.C. to Colonel Sir Herbert Chermside, the British Commissioner.

About the time of the rising the British Government, in spite of warnings, had thought fit to reduce the garrison of the Province of Kandia, the part allotted to British jurisdiction, to half a battalion under the command of Lt.-Colonel Reid of the Highland Light Infantry (71st Foot). Sir Herbert Chermside was temporarily absent when the Moslem population of Kandia massacred 700 men, women, and children of the Christian population, among whom were about 45 men of the Highland Light Infantry. A certain number of women and children in the town were saved by the bravery of Padre Antonino of the Capuchin Order, who collected them in his monastery. When the Moslems had done their worst in the town they attacked the monastery. Padre Antonino opened the gates and stood in the gateway with his arms widely stretched and called

out in a loud voice, "Come on, my friends, I am ready for you, but before a single bullet reaches those behind me it must first pass through my heart." The rabble, strange to say, melted away like magic, and the monastery was not further attacked. When I heard of the bravery of this heroic priest I called on him to express my esteem and admiration of his conduct. He smiled, saying, "It was no merit of mine, but an inspiration from above, which helped me to save a number of fellow creatures from death and worse."

Two young officers greatly contributed to put a rapid stop to the carnage by giving notice, at the risk of their lives, to our men-of-war in the Bay. The Turkish fortress and quarter were at once bombarded by the guns of the men-of-war and the massacres ceased. These terrible doings in Crete roused the whole of Europe, and troops of all nationalities poured into the island and men-of-war arrived, and finally this lovely old island of Grecian fame was freed from the cursed dominion of Turkey, and placed under Prince George of Greece, who was nominated as High Commissioner. St Paul states that a prophet of the Cretans described them as "always liars, evil beasts," and this can be readily understood. A Christian population, under the dominion of the Turks, has an extremely hard time, and practises all sorts of subterfuges in order that it may be let alone. The Turks, on the other hand, are roused to fury against the Christians, who are hard-working people, and murder and massacre their Christian subjects in all parts of the Empire, as soon as a favourable opportunity arises.

It is this cruel treatment by the Turks that induces a certain number of Christians to take refuge in Islamism, and it is an interesting fact that these perverts become extremely fanatical and are the greatest enemies of the Christians. The best thing that could happen for the unfortunate Christian population of Crete was their severance from the galling and degrading Turkish yoke. The number of lives lost in the Kandia massacre was largely, if not wholly, due to the confidence England had placed in Sultan Hamid's false promises of reforms to the Christian population, promises which he never intended to fulfil. The effect of the European Gendarmerie Corps, which was to do great things in keeping the people in order, was accepted enthusiastically by Sultan Hamid, since he was confident of the fiasco such a body would prove to be, as it had no power to arrest or condemn the Turkish officials at fault, as they were completely protected by the secret forces of the Sultan. The Cour Judiciare appointed under the Presidency of Mr Alvarez, one of our able consuls, and another European President had no better success, and caused endless jealousies and wranglings. The expulsion of the Turks from the island was certainly no small success. On this point I heard of the able and highly distinguished rôle that Captain Custance played by shipping four thousand refugees to the island of Milo with every comfort and security. The expulsion of the Turkish forces is also worthy of mention. The troops were made, much against their wish, to embark on the ships that were to take them to Turkey. My son, owing to his

knowledge of Turkish, was sent on board shortly before the vessel sailed to claim the key of the fortress, which the commander was carrying away. My son told me that there was one moment when he thought there was but little chance of his getting out alive from the enraged crowd of soldiers burning with indignation at the humiliation of their expulsion. However, he succeeded in obtaining the key, and on landing at once went to the fortress and lowered the Turkish flag. The expulsion of the Turkish forces had been delayed till after the arrest, condemnation and hanging of the criminals who had murdered the British soldiers. In spite of the fact that 5000 international troops were in Kandia, the chief instigators of the massacre, the Sultan's representative and the chief of the police, managed to escape.

When Jeanne and I arrived at Kandia all the trouble was over. The diplomatic and political questions were settled. Colonel Sir Herbert Chermside, who had been High Commissioner for some time, was a great favourite, especially among the Cretan hanoums. After the punishment of the culprits the Moslem fanatical element hurried away as fast as it could find boats to take it.

The Gendarmerie Corps, composed of a variety of nationalities, was quartered close to the little house I had taken. It was an unkempt, unshaved, poor-looking lot of men, not in any way to be compared to our fine, trim military police, who were imposing in appearance and correct in their behaviour. Many of the Christian families who had left the island immediately after the massacre had not yet returned, but a good many liberal-

minded Moslem families were still there, waiting to learn the fate of their beloved island, and inspired by the hope that it might be placed under the suzerainty of Great Britain. I was asked by Sir Herbert Chermside to attend a meeting of Moslem ladies to learn their sentiments and opinions. I willingly consented to do this. On my entering the room, crowded with ladies, they all rose and received me most kindly and with one voice asked me, "How is our dear friend, Sir Herbert Chermousaki (Chermside)? When is he going to write to Victoria, the great Queen of England, to ask her to take us under her protection and appoint him our Governor? We love the English as they are not like any other nation. We have samples of all the nations in the Gendarmerie Corps, and we cordially detest them all and their impudent manners towards us, except the English, who, be they officers or men, are respectful to us."

I hastened to communicate these flattering sentiments to Sir Herbert, who was naturally pleased to hear of them. I felt pretty certain that the message these ladies entrusted to his care to be conveyed to Her Majesty Queen Victoria would not bring about the result they desired.

The weather towards the end of February was most delightful. In spite of the recent ravages and the destruction of olive groves, orange gardens, and vineyards, the fertile country left to the free caprice of Nature lost no time in adorning itself with millions of anemone blossoms of every hue and with a great variety of other plants and ferns, which delighted Sir Herbert Chermside, who was a true lover and student of Nature. The country

was perfectly safe, in spite of the fact that our forces were being withdrawn. My son and his bright young fellow officers became very much at home in the little house I had secured for Jeanne and myself. We had a fat old Cretan cook, who proved to be far more eloquent in pleading the wrongs of her country than capable of the practice of her profession. At times hosts and guests had to remove her out of the way while they tried their 'prentice hands at cooking. Provisions were good and plentiful, though rather dear, but this always occurs where English gold makes its appearance. Yaghourt (soured milk), kaimac, a very rich cream, and all native products were greatly appreciated, as well as the excellent fruit. The weekly market held on the Piazza was both interesting and profitable, as the peasants, chiefly women, used to come down with their loads of edibles, as well as with home-made rugs, woven cloths, and a kind of serge of excellent quality. The people looked vigorous and healthy and had a type of their own, a sure sign that the Cretan race had remained pure in spite of its having passed through times of great national misfortunes, when it had lost its old prosperity and glory and become degraded and broken by the Ottoman conquests. No human race that in its prosperous ages has risen and distinguished itself by reason of virtues and merits ever loses entire caste, and its people, even when bottled up for centuries on an island, will be found still fresh and vigorous. This can be well said of the brave Cretans who had suffered much and suffered long in their captivity, but who have produced a M. Venizelos,

a generous and gifted leader, and the able re-creator of modern Greece. In speaking of the hoped-for future prosperity of Crete, joined now to the mother country Greece, I must not forget to speak of its beautiful archæological treasures. Crete, like Troy, had for centuries had relics buried in the depths of her soft oily soil. During the Turkish domination occasional finds had been known to have been made, but unlike Troy she had had no Dr Schliemann to unearth pottery and marble and to bring them together and show examples of her past art. All I saw in the museum at Kandia was a collection of articles of no special value cast about pell-mell on the dusty ground. Doubtless there were treasures to be found among them, and it is to be hoped they were given their proper place by Sir Arthur Evans, a great student of Grecian antiquities, who was an old friend of mine, and who reached Kandia just as I had gone on board ship to return to Salonika. I left Crete rather hurriedly as I had received a telegram from my husband telling me he had been appointed Consul-General at Boston. I learned later that Sir Arthur Evans' explorations in Crete had been most successful.

Before leaving Crete I paid a visit to Canea. It appeared to have preserved a good deal of its ancient remains about the port and old bastions. I stopped a few days under the hospitable roof of the Consul-General and his wife, Sir Alfred and Lady Biliotti. Sir Alfred's intelligent and useful services during the rebellion were much appreciated by our Government. In spite of being as deaf as a post it was astonishing how

he managed to carry out successfully his arduous diplomatic relations with his numerous colleagues, who were in anything but cordial relations with one another. I had a pleasant time here, and even assisted at the marriage of one of Lady Biliotti's granddaughters, a thin, delicate looking child of sixteen, to a gigantic Montenegrin, who was a Captain in the Gendarmerie Corps. I felt sorry for the child when I thought of the hard work that awaited her in her new home, where the kneading of bread and the drawing of water from the public fountains would fall to her share. Years ago I remember a Slav doctor with the Turkish army told me that he had heard on the best authority that the valiant King of Montenegro washed his own socks at night in order to have them dry and ready to put on in the morning. Stories of much the same practical kind are told of the sweet Queen of Italy, and her knowledge of home industries is said at times to astonish the Italian *haut monde.* I consider it a great privilege to understand household work and to practise it occasionally, for one never knows what destiny has in store for one. Luckily the modern girl, owing to the many and varied works she has been called upon to do in consequence of this long and trying war will have something to thank it for in making her familiar with many phases of household and other work.

CHAPTER XXIII

1898

On arrival at Salonika on my return from Crete I found my husband buried beneath a mound of letters and newspaper cuttings he had collected during nearly fifty years' official life, and which fortunately he had been able to save at the time the Consulate was burned down. As he was a great newspaper reader and a most orderly person in the management of his private and official correspondence, he had dated and numbered each letter or cutting, had noted his own reflections on the latter and arranged them in indexed volumes, so that when writing on any subject concerning Turkey he could at once refer to his notes. The volumes of these cuttings filled many boxes, and before my husband left for Boston he entrusted them to my care to have them sent to whatever place we should choose for our permanent home. I had them all brought to Malta, thanks to some of our kind friends in the Navy. I sometimes peep at this accumulation of interesting papers, and regret that up to the present time I have not been able to make use of them.

My husband's appointment to Boston as British Consul, while retaining his title of Consul-General,

had been a surprise to me and to many others interested in his work in the Near East. One or two papers criticised his transference to the New World as an error since it took away one of the oldest and best informed British Agents in Turkey. Be this as it may, my husband was a *persona grata* with the Americans, and was well known in their Government Department as having rendered good service to American subjects, many of whom were missionaries in Upper Macedonia and Bulgaria and in places where America had no representative. My husband had received the thanks of the President of the United States on three occasions, and after the lamentable murder of Mr Merion, one of the missionaries at Philippopolis, he was offered the post of American Consul in Macedonia. This position, however, he was unable to accept in addition to his work as British Consul.

Sir John's appointment to Boston was to fill up his final term of three or four years in the Service. Its object was a gracious attention on the part of Lord Salisbury to modify as far as he could the small salary my husband had had as Consul-General at Salonika, since an additional two hundred pounds per annum was given in the pension to the holder of the Boston post. Unfortunately my husband only enjoyed this addition to his pension long enough to pay off the debts he had incurred at Salonika in consequence of his determination to represent Her Majesty Queen Victoria's Government adequately.

Some of our men-of-war were still at Salonika, but busy as we both were pulling down, packing

up, and setting apart for sale such of our furniture as we could not take away, we neither of us missed any opportunity of seeing our naval friends, among whom were Admiral Troubridge and his officers. We had a farewell lunch with them, and drank the last bottles of champagne from the cellar to wish God-speed to my dear husband, who, alas! left next morning for Boston.

After lunch we went on to the verandah and were photographed in a group.

It was on his departure that I realised how popular my husband had made himself in Salonika. Half the town was at the station to bid him farewell, and he felt much affected on leaving the country in which he had spent a life-time, and in which he had made so many good friends. But such is life. Who can control the turns of the wheel of fortune?

After my husband had gone, Jeanne and I had hard work to settle everything and to hand over the dear old Consulate to an ungracious Austrian Consul, and his still more ungracious Slav wife, who insisted on taking possession of the house within two days of my husband's departure, and who refused my request that I might leave one or two of my boxes in the basement till I could find some other place to house them in. The fatigue and worry of those two days were so great that for the first time I felt really exhausted, and realised that the years which had slipped by so quickly in the enjoyment of peace and comfort in my home had left their mark upon me.

I went to stay for a few days' rest with some friends before I started for Constantinople on a

visit to my dear brother, Sir Alfred Sandison. I was very glad in after years that I had made this journey to Constantinople, as it was the last time I saw my brother, my sister, Mrs Longworth, and my good kind cousin Edward, the three dearest relatives I had, who all passed away in the course of the next few years. These losses weighed heavily on me in after life. Some people are happy enough to be able to live on their remembrances of the past. I never could bring myself to do so, as, when these are pleasant, I cannot but regret them, and when the reverse they cause me sorrow.

During this visit to Constantinople I found the place changed for the worse. It was after the massacre of the poor Armenian community, and wherever I went I found that sad, cruel affair the chief topic of conversation. The doors of innocent, harmless families had been marked during the night, so that their houses might be recognised in order to separate them from other European and Christian communities. The horror of the scenes baffle description. Men, women, and children were cut up, wherever they could be found, or drowned or caused to disappear, never to be seen or heard of again. The worst of it was that these people do not seem to have given the least provocation, nor had they the least knowledge of what was awaiting them.

I heard much talk, during this visit, of the Germans and the influence they had begun to exercise over Turkish affairs. The Turkish Army was under German control and largely officered by Germans, and the Germans and their wives were

busy in their efforts to ingratiate themselves with Turkish families, in order to create an easy entrance into the commercial world. A number of German shops had sprung into existence filled with German goods at such low prices that everybody rushed to secure what they could. I remember buying for a shilling a good knife, which I still possess. I am sure a similar pocket-knife could not have been bought for less than six or seven shillings in London. Beer-shops increased vastly in number both in Pera and Stamboul. I was passing one of these beer-shops one day when a German, accompanied by a native, came to a standstill. The native indicated the beer-shop; the German stamped his foot and said, "Die kirche, die kirche, ich wŭrde an die kirche gehen." The man turned to me and asked me if I could tell him what the German wanted. When I told him he said, "How could I guess he wanted a church, when all the Germans I see ask me the way to the beer-house."

I do not think that the Germans were ever popular at Constantinople, nor was the Kaiser's visit with the Empress and his staff much appreciated, owing to the large amount of money it cost the Treasury. The Sultan, Abdul Hamid, had made it a point that all the expenses of the Kaiser's journey to Jerusalem were to be defrayed by the Turkish Government. I happened to be at Constantinople at the time, and felt amused after the Kaiser's departure to hear the reflections made in Turkish circles on the meagre return His Majesty made to the Sultan for the very valuable and beautiful gems and other precious things

he and the Kaiserin had received. The Kaiser presented to his Imperial host a stick which had belonged to his great-grandfather. Was this to show that he intended the Turks to obey him? On his return to Berlin the Kaiser was more generous in his gift to the Governor of Jerusalem and sent a life-size portrait of himself in rich robes and decorations, to be hung in Government House. No sooner did the picture reach Jerusalem than the German Consul came to announce officially the arrival of his master's promised gift, and to desire that it should be hung in accordance with the Kaiser's order next to that of his beloved friend, the Sultan. The poor Governor could not but draw a comparison between the magnificent portrait of the Kaiser and the twopenny halfpenny oleograph of the Sultan which hung on the wall, and whilst profusely thanking the Consul for the gift, he said he felt it was beyond his power to place the Kaiser's portrait next to that of the Sultan.

"Well," said the Consul, "I want to see it placed according to the instructions I have received, next to that of H.M. the Sultan."

The Governor, who felt he must temporise, said, "Of course, Effendin, of course, but before hanging the portrait I must have some repairs done to the room." The Consul, feeling it would not be tactful to show any opposition to this suggestion, withdrew, but begged that the Governor would lose no time in getting the repairs done.

As soon as the Consul had taken his departure the poor Governor rubbed his hands in despair,

called his Council to his aid and explained the situation to them.

"If this grand portrait of the Kaiser is hung beside the miserable portrait of the Sultan, everyone in the country will consider that the Kaiser and not the Sultan is the master of Jerusalem." The Council, embarrassed, decided to telegraph to the Porte for instructions. The answer came back "Temporise," not reckoning on the German Consul's insistence to see the portrait hung at once. After a warning or two the Consul threatened that if the portrait was not put in the place indicated within twenty-four hours he would report the Governor, when he would have to suffer the consequences. A fresh despatch of telegrams to the Porte ensued, when the Sultan, though annoyed, had to submit and gave the necessary order.

I wonder if our glorious Army found the portrait still there when they entered Jerusalem, and if so if they turned its face to the wall in the same way that Abd-el-Kader at Brussa turned the portrait of Napoleon III. to the wall after the French escort left him. Anyhow, the best use that our brave soldiers could make of the portrait would be to use it for a target to practise upon.

I did not enjoy this visit to Constantinople at all. There was a dulness about the place and a disquieting agitation among the diplomatic corps of no good omen. Even at my dear brother's place there were comings and goings of worried looking people who came to talk over matters with him. I felt I should be more comfortable and more at my ease in Salonika and returned

there to spend a few weeks at Sedes, a charming watering-place a few miles from Salonika, where my husband and I had frequently stayed, as we greatly enjoyed the walks in the country towards the Hortiach mountain, from the summit of which we had frequently watched the beautiful effects of the setting sun. I do not know whether the waters at the Sedes baths had ever been correctly analysed, but they contained sulphur, iron, and alkalis, and were most efficacious in some cases. I had seen people doubled up with rheumatism arrive at the baths, and after a few days become so much better that they were able to walk easily. My own experience was that a few weeks' stay at Sedes now and again kept me free from the horrid articular rheumatism to which I have now become a victim, and which only allows me to take a few steps outside without support. How I wish I could return to Sedes for a course of baths! In my time there was no proper accommodation, only a wretched han and three or four miserable cottages. The baths were of Roman construction, patched up here and there with wood where they had given way. Sedes itself is placed on a fertile plateau and is a healthy, breezy place, close to the foot of the Hortiach mountain, and not far from the marshes, much appreciated by sportsmen for the snipe and wild fowl of all kinds to be found there. I hope the waters at Sedes are being made use of by the wounded as well as by the rheumatic patients of our Army.

During the year I spent in Salonika after my husband had left for Boston, I felt much *en l'air* and spent six months with my good friends, Mr and

Mrs Charles Allatini, who had a beautiful house in the country, which was always hospitably open to the many friends they had in the Navy. Later on, when the Allatinis made their home in England their house was bought by the Young Turkey Party, who used it as a prison for Sultan Abdul Hamid and part of his harem. Sultan Hamid remained there until a few years later, when he was removed to one of the small islands near Constantinople, from whence I hear he has just passed into the next world to enter, I suppose, the Gates of Gehennem, as the Turks say, to expiate all the crimes he committed here. It is due to the evil genius of Sultan Hamid that Turkey has been brought to the verge of ruin, yet, in spite of all his double dealings, he managed, as he justly boasted, to keep the country together, leaving to the Young Turkey Party the work of its dismemberment and the delusion of rebuilding Turkey as a purely Osmanli power and of making it the conqueror of the world.

Salonika I hear is much changed since I left it nineteen years ago, and it is thought that in time it may become a prosperous important town. I also hear that it is the hope and ambition of the Greek population to see Salonika, and in fact the whole of Macedonia, pass under British protection. This hope and ambition appear to take root wherever our glorious Navy and Army set foot, but this is in no way surprising, for the people say: "Wherever the English go, instead of taking from us, as the other nations do whatever they can, they mend, build, and help in every possible way." I believe there is much wealth to be found in

minerals of every kind around Salonika. An English engineer, who inspected the country in search of coal some years ago, stated in his report that a huge bed of lignite extended from the town of Salonika to some distance into the country. Agriculture could yield much better returns than it does if there were better irrigation. I had a maid from a Greek village not far from Salonika whose father, a very respectable peasant, came one day and asked to see me.

"Kyria" (Madame), said he, "I come to ask you to purchase a very fine chrome mine for thirty liras." This reminded me of my silkworm experience at Adrianople in my younger days, but as I knew my husband would object to my embarking on any speculation of the kind I refused with thanks. Later on, I was told that Sultan Hamid's Comptroller of the Civil List had bought the chrome mine and within a short time realised £10,000 out of it. Such unbelievable cases occurred frequently in Turkey owing to the incapacity of the Turks to form companies, and also because there was much difficulty in getting the necessary concessions from the Sultan. In those days Yildiz, the Imperial Palace, was a nest of shameless corruption, where one favourite tried to nullify the promises made to another to obtain the Sultan's signature. It cost the applicant a fortune to settle the claims of the various people who promised to obtain the Sultan's wished-for signature, the Sultan himself, it was more than suspected, having a share in the spoils.

CHAPTER XXIV

1899

THE prospect of travelling to Boston alone was not cheering. I had been constantly surrounded by many friends for twenty-five years in the interesting old country of Macedonia, the home of the Grecian gods and goddesses, who, in spirit, had reigned supreme over its fertile valleys beneath the shelter of the snow-covered Mount Olympus and its sister Mount Pindus, where mortals, when Greece was at the zenith of her art, had built temples and had adorned them with exquisite taste for the benefit of devout worshippers. The Roman and Byzantine Powers had also left treasures of art, some of which fortunately had not been entirely devastated by the Ottoman conquest. In course of time other forces had aided in making the history of Macedonia and in Salonika, its old capital, changes had been made and continue to be made, which I trust are of good omen. Foreseeing more or less of what was coming I felt very sorry to leave Salonika after the good times I had enjoyed there with the coming and going of our Squadrons, and the never-to-be-forgotten six months during which our ships had remained in the Bay. The amount of

British gold spent in the markets during that six months was said to be about £1000 a day. Sultan Hamid, who never had enough money, on hearing of this, ordered the Governor of Salonika to send £10,000 a month to Yildiz, the Imperial Palace. On receipt of this order the Defterdar, or treasurer of the Vilayet, resigned, since at the same time the Sultan told him to send all the quarterly revenue. The poor Governor tore his hair in despair as to how he could squeeze out the amount for the salaries of the officials of the Vilayet and the other local expenses.

We all had such good times in those dear old days, full of harmless fun and amusing, practical jokes, engineered by the sporting young officers, "my extraordinary nephews." I remember a grand picnic organised by Lieutenant S. at the Horticultural Gardens at Sedes. Everyone was happy and in high spirits. After luncheon S., delighted with the success of the party, came up to me and whispered, "Aunt Fanny, I intend to take the prettiest ladies for a walk one by one and to kiss them all." "Nonsense," I said, "you risk a box on the ears from some and a cartel from a jealous husband or two asking you to fight a duel."

"Wait and see," answered he, and disappeared into the garden with the prettiest girl. He came back after a time looking well pleased with himself, and went on with this amusing game to the end, and then came to report "That it was all right, as he had not received any blows, nor did he expect to be called out."

It was my duty to punish him for his

impudence, but I never could put on a serious face with him, he was so full of fun and good nature.

Most of the youngsters on the ships were daily in and out of the Consulate, playing pranks whenever they got a chance. If at tea-time one or two of their superior officers were to be seen reflected in a mirror coming through the drawing-room door whilst they had their backs to it, they made dreadful grimaces and tried to upset the dignified look they assured me I assumed. On one occasion half a dozen of these boys came in to be dressed up for a charade. It happened that we were expecting Lord Charles Beresford to stay a night or two with us on his return from home. My husband, who greatly loved a joke, noticed in the group a young middy, dressed up as a housemaid.

"Come along, future admiral," said he, according to his usual habit in addressing a middy, "I shall need your services presently to take Lord Charles up to his room and to unpack for him."

Before the boy had time to answer Lord Charles was announced, and my husband turned to meet him, and after talking for a little while pointed out to him, on his way to his room, the soi-disant maid, who was to attend to his needs. Lord Charles was much too hot and tired to pay any attention to the maid, who unpacked deftly for him and laid his clothes out in approved fashion. At supper, when he came in after the charade was over, he noticed, much to his amusement, the pretty housemaid, apparently quite at her ease, chatting to those around her. He

quickly realised the joke that had been played on him, and burst out laughing as he shook his finger at my husband as the instigator of the joke. Lord Charles was renowned for having been a regular pickle in his young days, and most good-naturedly did not mind the tables being turned upon him.

Another time I asked Lieutenant S. to take the place of the missing fourteenth at a dinner I was giving to some admirals and captains. He demurred at first, but yielded to my request. My maid, Elvira, a nervous creature, helped to wait that night. After she had served "my extraordinary nephew" I noticed that she stood as far away as possible from the other guests and held the dish she was offering at arm's length. This attracted my attention, and when she served me I taxed her with her awkward waiting. Forgetting herself, she justified her action in a voice loud enough to be heard by my guests, "Madame, Monsieur S. m'a pincé les jambes."

When after dinner I asked S. what he meant by his atrocious behaviour, he said, "Aunt Fanny they *are* such sticks."

Of course the story went the round of the Squadron and amused everybody.

But I must not forget the good Turkish saying, "Vakit yoldjouya yol" (Do not linger on the road), and must bring my recollections of Salonika to an end and bid farewell to the dear old place.

I began my journey for the New World via Uskub on the Dedeagatch railway line, which

passes through Bulgaria. On reaching Uskub I was reminded of my youthful days in that God-forsaken country, and I wondered how I had stood it. Uskub, still under the Turkish dominion, looked even worse than formerly in spite of the railway from Constantinople to Vienna, via Belgrade, the capital of Serbia. There was only one wretched hotel in Uskub, kept by a beggarly blonde German, who, a couple of years previously, had married the blacker of my two blackies. A year later the poor thing returned to her old home to die.

My reflections were anything but joyful as I wandered in the parts where the best years of my youth had been spent, and to which the evolution of time had not brought any improvement. Even the railway carriage, dirty, dusty, and uncomfortable, seemed in harmony with the country. On crossing the frontier into Bulgaria I rejoiced to notice the changes and improvements that had taken place, and the air of prosperity that prevailed. In Sofia, the capital, fine houses, good shops, and public gardens had sprung into being like magic.

"Decidedly," I said to myself, "old Bulgaria has awoke."

A great step had been made in creating a House of Parliament in a population essentially agrarian, of few words and less eloquence. I thought I might still find the members of Parliament in their sheep-skin caps and coats, but instead, I found that Vienna had furnished the honourable members with plenty of black cloth and many pairs of white kid gloves, the use

of which was taught by the few Bulgarians who had travelled in foreign countries, or by the civilised young men from Robert College. The proper use of gloves and handkerchiefs was, however, still a matter of some difficulty to a few, who did not quite know whether they had to put on their gloves before they blew their noses, or whether the pocket-handkerchief was a cover in which to wrap up the gloves. Indulgence must, of course, be shown to all beginners. No doubt the admirers of the Bulgarians in England see these external signs of civilisation, and do not give sufficient attention to the inherent characteristics of the Bulgarian nation. These characteristics call for the greatest care of the Entente in the settlement of the Balkan States. On arrival at Sofia M. Stambouloff honoured me with a visit. M. Stambouloff was the Venizelos of his country, whose ambition, so he told me, was that the Bulgarian Army should reach Constantinople. On noticing my questioning looks he banged his fist on the table, saying, "Et quand même Madame nous le ferons."

The untimely death, or rather murder, of this great patriot and, I believe, honest man, deprived Bulgaria of a great leader at a critical time in her history.

I must give a bit of unwritten Bulgarian history, which strangely enough passed through my hands. During one of my visits to Constantinople, when Bulgaria had begun seriously and justly to clamour for reforms, a deputation of Bulgarians walked in to solicit my help in asking the English Ambassador to receive into the

Embassy one of the clever students from Robert College. M. Tchomakoff, the spokesman of the deputation, which by the way was chiefly composed of old Philippopolis friends, said, "We want one of our students to have free entrée into the Embassy, so that he may have the opportunity of giving proof of the miserable condition the Bulgarians find themselves placed in at the present time. We do not mind how humble a position our representative has, he might even be a shoeblack, so long as he is there to give a truthful account of Bulgaria's needs and aspirations."

I could not refuse to render to my old friends what I considered a simple service. They cordially thanked me, and said they would return in twenty-four hours for the reply.

I passed on the request to my brother, who was Oriental Secretary and First Dragoman, asking him to report it to His Excellency the Ambassador. My brother did not look at all encouraging, but said, "Come and see me later on."

His answer, however, was, "Impossible, it cannot be done."

"Nonsense," said I impulsively, "What harm can there be in the Government being informed of the condition of Bulgaria."

My brother smiled, saying, "Who tells you, silly little advocate of the Bulgarian cause, that the British Government wants to know at this moment what is going on in Bulgaria?"

Next morning the deputation returned for the reply. I softened it down as much as I could by expressing the regrets of the Ambassador on the inability of his Government to take up the

Bulgarian question, since it was busy with other important State affairs.

"Is that so," said my disappointed friends. "We neither like nor trust Russia, but *faute de mieux*, we go from here to the Russian Embassy to settle matters with Russia."

Shortly afterwards Russia declared war against Turkey. The Bulgarian troubles were just the excuse Russia wanted. The Bulgarian patriots neither loved nor trusted Russia, and were very much in dread of her influence over the country. The patriots were a set of honest men, justly anxious to clear the nation from the degrading power of Turkey, whose sole aim was to depress the unfortunate people in every way, and to hinder their advance towards progress and civilisation.

I was especially interested in Serbia and her pretty picturesque capital, Belgrade, situated on the banks of the Danube, which alone separates Serbia from Austro-Hungary. Belgrade struck me as being greatly improved. The town, bright and peaceful, gave no sign of the coming storm and tragic end, in after years, of its young King and Queen, murdered to gratify party vengeance. By the extinction of the Obrenovitch family dangers of this kind were thought to have been removed for good, but alas! luckless Serbia never expected to have in the twentieth century the deplorable set-back she has had at the hands of her cruel enemies, who are determined, if possible, to totally destroy her. There is hope that this will not be realised, since England and her Allies are deeply interested in Serbia's destiny. A short

sketch of Serbia's history may not, I hope, be found out of place in these memoirs.

The origin of the Serbs, like that of the other Balkan peoples, is rather hazy, beyond the fact that they sprang from the regions of the Carpathian Mountains. They were a tribal race, under the control of a chieftain. They appeared in the Balkan Peninsula and crossed the Danube, encouraged by the Byzantine Empire, since they formed a bulwark against the invasions of other barbarous tribes. The Serbians flourished, and in the seventh century spread over a considerable portion of the Balkan Peninsula, extending their conquests into Macedonia and making Ragusa their capital. Growing strong and self-confident, in spite of their endless wars against their deadly enemies, the Bulgarians and other tribes, they prospered and formed their republic into a kingdom. Becoming more amenable to the influence of civilisation they adopted Christianity. In 1336 the nation had reached its zenith, and the country was raised to the rank of Empire during the reign of Stéphan Dushan, the great Slavonic genius. The short-lived empire began quickly to decline under the rising star of Turkey, which overpowered the Serbian forces at the famous Battle of Kossowa. The result of that battle sealed the downfall of Serbia. Serbia's civilisation at that time was in advance of some of the other states, and she might have become a fine European Power had she been fortunate enough to escape the degrading influence of the Osmanli domination. Of late years Serbia was taken up by Austro-Hungary, whose treatment of her has been even

more cruel and unjustifiable than that of the Turks.

I left Belgrade with my heart full of sweet memories of the time I spent there with my dear sister, Mrs Longworth, and her clever, delightful husband, who was one of the finest men I ever knew. After Belgrade my journey to London via Vienna was comparatively commonplace.

CHAPTER XXV

1899-1900

I LEFT for Boston on one of those large liners, which appeared to me to be a floating town in miniature, where people lived, loved, married, and died, with no other marked difference than that in the latter case the wide ocean and not mother earth received their mortal remains.

On reaching Boston our huge boat appeared dwarfed by the vast quays, where wonderful machinery such as I had never dreamed of in the Near East took up, carried from ship to shore, and gently set down quantities of luggage or letter-bags. My husband who had come to welcome me looked so small down below under immense cranes that I hardly recognised him. Once landed he put me into a carriage. The custom-house officials graciously passed my boxes at once, and we drove away, while many of the lady passengers were still wondering how best to hide some of their precious Parisian purchases.

My husband took me to an hotel which occupied the whole of one side of a street, and with his latchkey opened a door and ushered me into a sweet, pretty apartment in the annexe of the vast building. He had to go off to his office

so left me with his blessing. I sat there by my solitary self a little uncomfortably dazed in mind and body after the sea journey, as we had been caught in the end of an Atlantic storm during the last day or two of our voyage. I noticed a bell and rang it. A fat, jolly looking Irish girl presented herself with a look of petulant surprise upon her face. "Madame," said she, "did you ring?"

"Yes," I said, but before I could add another word she said, "Madame, let me at once tell you that it is not customary to ring up servants at undue times. The service, once done in the morning, suffices for the rest of the day, and any little extra thing the lady wants she has to do herself."

"But suppose," I began.

"There is no 'but,' Madame, unless you pay down half a dollar each time."

I thanked her for her timely information and began to look about me. Everything seemed beautifully clean, elegant, and orderly, but of bedroom furniture such as I knew it there was none, and I began to speculate whether my husband slept on one or two chairs, whether he went to the pump for a wash, and whether he did his shaving on one of the elegant little tables that appeared to me to be more ornamental than useful. Puzzled in my mind as to how I should accommodate myself to this new style, and where my clothes were to be put, I tried to open a big glass cupboard, misplaced as I thought in a sitting-room. It refused to open to all the efforts I made. I next tried a smaller article of furniture,

which looked like a chest of drawers, with no better result. On examining what appeared to be a table I unknowingly pressed a spring, when a lid suddenly sprang up and hit me on the nose. I looked round for some water to bathe my nose, but there was none to be seen. Finding myself thus nonplussed in every way I sat down on a rocking-chair and nursed my poor nose with my pocket-handkerchief, and wondered whether all American ladies were in the habit of rocking themselves to sleep at night, and whether I should ever be able to do so, when my husband suddenly and silently walked up to me on the soft carpet. Seeing my distressed face and my red nose he anxiously asked me whether I was ill.

"Of course not," I said, "at least I hope not, but how on earth do you expect me to live in a room that is all show without a single object of practical use."

"Is that all," said he, with a smile, "shut your eyes for a minute till I tell you to open them."

My husband was greatly amused at my surprised look when he bade me open my eyes, and I saw the rapid transformation of what I had taken for a pretty sitting-room into a perfectly furnished bedroom. The glass cupboard I had tried to open turned out to be a bed, the deep-bottomed table, the lid of which had hit my nose, was an elegant wash-stand, and the rest of the furniture through the agency of springs or electricity was transformed into something adapted for a bedroom.

"There," said my husband in a triumphant voice, "this is not Turkey but America, a new

world which has made a rapid advance over the old one. You, a child of the sunny East, have much to see and to learn. Everything here is done on a large scale as well as on practical lines, but hurry up, as we have to go down to luncheon in a few minutes." My visit to America proved to be a long series of surprises of the labour-saving methods employed.

The day following my arrival a meeting of Christian Scientists was held by order of Mrs Eddy, the great prophetess.

I thought to myself that that would be another novelty worth seeing. I found that most of the Christian Scientists were sober, solemn-looking people of both sexes and all ages. Some of them looked not too healthy, and I was told that on principle they neglected their physical ailments, speaking of them as not existing, and leaving them to the care of the "healers," who prayed for them and over them at so much an hour, in addition to other formalities which interested me much owing to the similarity of this newest form of faith with that of the old Islamic one. The Turks do not give any serious attention to diseases, and even the most enlightened among them first have recourse in cases of illness to one of the learned hodjas or priests for prayers, amulets, and texts from the Koran, which they put on their heads or hang round their necks and arms. There is no show about these matters, they form part of the Islamic faith and are reverently and sincerely followed. On both sides no doubt wonderful cures are claimed in cases of neurotic complaints or of slight derangements.

I had the good fortune to come across Mr and Mrs Kerr, dear old friends from Constantinople. Mr Kerr was a nephew of Admiral Lord Walter Kerr. We had delightful times together, and shared the comforts of my pretty apartment whenever they came to Boston, and amused ourselves by making dainty little Turkish dishes. We wandered about the town by day and often played bridge in the evening. I did not visit much, as I was not well, but occasionally I joined progressive bridge parties and played for prizes, though I did not care very much for these parties; but bridge was the great rage in Boston at that time.

There are two or three great forces in America, such as the Trusts, the Press, and the Police, which can make or mar the success of individuals as well as of great enterprises, and which are not always in harmony with public interests. In spite of all these things the New World is one of steady progress, in a way outdoing the Old World. The American descendants of the old country are a fine and gallant race who are developing in our times many of the old virtues which have brought the old and new countries close together in a lasting Entente Cordiale, much to the advantage of both. There is much to say in praise of America's share in the present troublous war, but I think it is best to let events speak for themselves.

Unfortunately I could not go about much owing to my increasing rheumatism. I was very sorry that this prevented my visiting Canada with my husband, when he went at the head of

the Veteran British Subjects to welcome Their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales. I saw the deputation, full of pride and joy at the prospect of doing homage to the future King of England, start from Boston. Needless to say Their Royal Highnesses received the deputation with great kindness and courtesy. The Prince recognised my husband and talked to him of the old days at Salonika, and expressed his regrets that he could no longer enjoy the excellent cigarettes I used to offer him. The deputation was deeply impressed by the gracious attention bestowed on my husband, and heartily cheered him.

My husband was delighted with his visit to Canada, and felt that that vast land was one of our finest colonies, which only needs the presence of some enlightened capitalists to develop more fully its wonderful natural resources.

The ladies of Canada presented to my husband a beautiful piece of needlework as a souvenir of the pleasant time he had spent there. It is always with the deepest interest that I give myself the pleasure of becoming aquainted with Canadian and other colonial ladies in Malta. I find them, with hardly an exception, simple, charming personalities, strong, healthy, and practical.

My stay in Boston came to a sudden end owing to my dear son's return to England from West Africa, where he had contracted blackwater fever. I travelled home on one of the big liners, and felt more at ease than I had done on my outward voyage, as I had become familiarised with the large scale on which everything connected with the New World seemed to be done.

My son and I went to Germany for treatment for him, and were given by a German doctor the address of a rest-house. No sooner had we entered the house than the door was locked behind us and two or three powerful men came and inspected us. We were ushered into the presence of the head of the establishment, who wanted me to sign a contract for the term of our stay; but since his personality did not appeal to either of us, I declined to do so. As there was no room in the rest-house for me I found a lodging close by. Directly I left my son was put to bed, and his clothes were taken away. The medical attendant, perfectly drunk, went to his room, and finding he was an English officer, began to insult the English and the army in so violent a manner that my son, weak as he was, felt he must leave the place immediately. It was only then that he realised that he was in a lunatic asylum, locked up in a room with barred windows. Next morning I got access to his room with great difficulty, when I found him crazy with his experiences of the previous evening and intent on leaving the place at once. It cost me two hundred francs to get away, but we left that morning. This is a strange world where the unexpected often happens. Neither my son nor I had reckoned to get out of the frying-pan into the fire, but within twenty-four hours we found ourselves in a very similar sort of place; but this time the director was honest enough to tell us that his place was for the mentally diseased. We tried no more rest homes after this, and after a short visit came away determined never to visit Germany again.

CHAPTER XXVI

1901

The climate of England gave me no pleasant welcome on my return from Germany, and I had to go to Woodhall Spa for my rheumatism, and was advised to live in the south of Europe. I decided to make Malta our permanent home, and, since my son was quartered there, I determined to start at once. I travelled on the *British Queen*, a cargo boat as uncomfortable and small as its name was good and great. I transhipped at Leghorn, where I had much trouble with the custom-house authorities. My luggage was taken into three different offices for the sake of the few pence each set of officials claimed after overhauling my things. A couple of agents of the famous Mafia Association followed my carriage and then got into the boat which took me to my steamer, in order to make sure of the tax which they imposed on both driver and boatman. I thought regretfully of the facilities of travel in Turkey, where once on arriving at Constantinople my maid went to the custom-house with my boxes and handed to the official in charge an advertisement from a biscuit box, which he gravely looked at upside down, nodded

his head in approval, and on the receipt of a shilling passed all my belongings.

I had visited Malta in my girlhood, but on my arrival there this time I was considerably impressed by the quaint-looking old town, or rather fortress, planted in a vast expanse of the Mediterranean, with azure waves beating against its time-worn walls and ramparts. The historical remains in Malta add a great charm to the island, which is said to be in the form of a huge mushroom, *i.e.*, a large domed surface on a narrow stalk of rock. In winter and spring Malta's rocky surface is covered with a velvety green carpet, interspersed with anemones, narcissus, blue iris, and other lovely flowers, while in the gardens a perfect wealth of roses is to be seen practically all the year round. In autumn and winter the blossoms are pale and sweet, like a timid maiden receiving the first kiss of love, whilst in spring and early summer the buds develop into blossoms of deeper colour and sweeter perfume. The orange and lemon trees take their share in adorning the island, with their gold and yellow fruits reflecting the bright soft shades of the stars above. All these beauties justify the Maltese in calling their island "Il fior del mondo." Many people come each year to seek the winter warmth and sun in spite of the drawbacks, such as the absence of good hotels, and of lifts to the many flats up long flights of stairs, and other minor discomforts felt by those who come from highly civilised countries.

Newcomers usually seek a home in Valetta, where the chief officials are quartered in fine old palaces and mansions built by the knights of St

John. Most of these lovely old auberges are full of paintings and decorations, relics of the knights. Some of these fine houses are said to be haunted by the spirits of knights and others of bygone centuries, who occasionally visit their old dwellings. Some spirits are said to inflict marks of their displeasure on one or more of the present inhabitants they do not approve of. Others silently walk in and out of their old homes and give no sign beyond their passing apparition. The Maltese are naturally the most numerous inhabitants of the island, and it is mostly they who receive these mysterious visitors.

Malta has great value and importance as a naval station with its numerous fine harbours and busy dockyard, and offers an ideal resort to our ships for rest and repairs, and a base from which they can guard the Mediterranean and the Near East. For these purposes Malta's value is priceless. It is England's care and money which have transformed the little island into a prosperous place, and she enjoys a peaceful security, in spite of the grumblings and murmurs of a few discontented inhabitants who sigh over the loss of cheap German-made goods, prompted probably by German spies and agents, who stuff the minds of ignorant people with wonderful promises of all that Germany would do for them should the island pass under the power of the Huns. These things would not be worth mentioning in themselves, but they show the efforts Germany is making here to diminish England's prestige.

But to return to my arrival in Malta. My son came on board to fetch me. We looked about

for a flat and took one in Strada Mezzodi. Jeanne joined us from Salonika, and, as my son was sent shortly on a mission to Italy, we two set to work to make our new home presentable before my husband should arrive from Boston. I must say that at the beginning I felt being cooped up in a little flat with only a few of my pretty belongings about me, and with but one servant, an ignorant Maltese maid of all work, as my domestic staff. Neither Jeanne nor I had much knowledge of housekeeping. I had forgotten all I knew, and Jeanne had had no experience. One day the maid was told to bring a fowl from the market. Jeanne inspected the bird and told Carmella that she had bought an old cock instead of a tender fowl. Carmella protested that it was a fowl, and when, on cleaning the bird, she found some eggs in various stages of development, she put them on a plate and triumphantly marched into the room, exclaiming, "Miss, miss, come and look! This cock must be from your country as Maltese cocks do not make eggs."

The scene was too funny for words, but I had to look serious in order not to hurt Jeanne's feelings.

My husband joined us soon after this. He liked Malta at once, and enjoyed meeting many friends who were resident here, and quickly won the hearts of the Maltese by taking a deep interest in their concerns. He made friends, too, with the old ladies, and much to the delight of the children used to throw chocolates to them in the street. My husband liked the club, and helped by an old friend, Admiral Hammet, he organised bridge

parties, which were then coming into fashion in Malta. With other friends he arranged some entertainments, combined with good lectures on many subjects, which satisfied all tastes and delighted the young people.

One of my husband's chief interests was the creation of a body of Boy Scouts, and he was the first Honorary President of the movement in Malta. I wish he had lived long enough to see the success of this highly civilising movement, and the happy results it is having in a place where compulsory education, with its elevating influence, is non-existent. The fact that the Boy Scout movement has been accepted without controversy and is very popular, shows that the Maltese have accepted the fact that discipline is good for their children.

Lord Grenfell, the Governor, was a delightful personality and enjoyed great popularity, and was aided by his charming niece, Mrs St Aubyn. The fine Squadron was under the command of Admiral Lord Fisher, with Lord Charles Beresford second in command. The ships were all under the control of distinguished men, most of whom we had known at Salonika. It was a great joy to us to meet our old friends again and to become acquainted with their families. Everyone was most kind to us.

Lady Dingli was amongst my earliest friends, and her permanent home being in Valetta was a great comfort to me. I very much regret that of late years, owing to the war, her visit to England has been very prolonged, and I have seen nothing of her; but her letters are a great pleasure to me.

Among the great number of friends I made

at this time I would specially mention Lady Barry, Lady Adelaide Colville, Lady Domvile, Lady Drury, Lady Curzon-Howe, Lady Phillimore, Lady Poë, and Lady Wemyss, who not only added much to the enjoyment of our life in the early days at Malta, but who showed me such extraordinary love and sympathy when the dark days of sorrow overtook me.

Those were, indeed, good times for Malta, undisturbed by political agitation or coming trouble. The officials, in peaceful enjoyment of their positions for a certain term of years, had no cares and responsibilities beyond the welfare of the inhabitants and the improvement of the island, and displayed hospitality with true British lavishness. Valetta teemed with life and animation, everyone ready to enjoy the bright sunshine, the delightful bathing, and the many other outdoor amusements.

It was during our first season in Malta that my husband, while absorbed in a game of bridge at the club, received a telegram telling him that he had received a knighthood. He read the telegram and passed it to Admiral Hammet, making a sign to him to say nothing. As soon as the game was finished the Admiral disappeared. He came straight to our flat, rushed into the drawing-room, took me in his arms and embraced me, and so scandalised the astonished Carmella that she rushed into Jeanne's room, crying out, "Miss, there is an officer in the drawing-room who must be mad. Come and see."

It was certainly a happy bit of news, which caused me much pleasure, as I felt my dear

husband had well earned a recognition of his long and loyal services to his country during half a century. I cannot remember how long after this it was that H.M. King Edward paid a visit to Malta. The visit was a great event and new roads were made in anticipation of the Royal visit, old roads were restored, ugly buildings were pulled down, and the neglected bit of land between Valetta and Floriana was laid out in pretty gardens. Most of this work was well and quickly done under the supervision of Sir Edward Merewether, one of the most distinguished and clever lieutenant-governors that Malta has ever had. His Majesty received a most hearty welcome, and gave great pleasure to all classes by walking freely about the town and chatting with people he recognised. There is no doubt that kindness and thoughtfulness for others are special gifts of our Royal Family. The Duke of Edinburgh was a great favourite in the Navy and at Malta, and so were all the other royal personages who honoured the island with a visit. I believe it was Queen Alexandra who won the hearts of the Maltese boatmen by going out alone in a dghasai, and who gave a sovereign to the delighted men on her return to shore. In a few hours this story was told all over Valetta.

The Duke of Connaught came as High Commissioner, and was accompanied by the Duchess and Princess Patricia. Malta was proud and delighted to have members of the Royal Family resident in her midst, while the Duke and Duchess appeared to like the little island with its sunny skies and the freedom from court

restraint. Both Sir John and I had most happy memories of the two years the Duke and Duchess were here, and I was very grateful for the special kindness they showed to my husband, who was beginning to feel his advancing years after the fatigue of incessant work for over half a century in the Service.

It was on the day of his arrival that King Edward asked for my husband and knighted him, saying, "Rise, Sir John, I am very glad to knight you with my own hands." I shall never forget how proud I felt that evening at a ball at the Palace to find myself in the midst of a large circle of old and new friends, who congratulated us on the happy event.

King Edward paid a second visit to Malta some time later, when I had the privilege of talking to him of the bygone Constantinople days.

The last Royal visit that Malta received was that of Their Majesties, King George and Queen Mary. The King is well known in Malta and everyone rejoiced to see him again. The Queen being with him gave double pleasure to all the inhabitants. Both Sir John and I have received so many kind attentions from the many members of the Royal Family it has been our privilege to meet, that I have an irresistible desire to put down in these my memoirs my humble thanks and my grateful feelings towards them.

It was on some of the State entertainments given at night that our glorious Squadrons looked their best. In peaceful repose in the Grand Harbour they showed thousands of electric lamps,

which shed their bright lights all around and seemed to reflect the stars above. Fireworks were sent up to return in showers of golden sparks, crossed and re-crossed by the wonderful beams of the searchlights, which revealed in the darkness the outlines of the great vessels of might and power. On guest nights these great giants were transformed into hospitable homes. Dancing-rooms, ornamented with beautiful flowers and flags, offered welcome and pleasure to the fortunate guests who entered this temporary fairyland. Those were happy, peaceful times, when a squadron of England's fine battleships, with its contingent followers, were all anchored in the Grand Harbour to enjoy rest, but ready at a moment's notice to put to sea for action if necessary.

Unfortunately the years that succeeded these happy times have brought cares and anxieties to the nation incidental to the evil times that have fallen on us, but the King and his people have bravely determined at all costs to uphold the freedom of the seas and the independence of small nations. The Kaiser must surely realise the error he has committed in overlooking the sea power of England and the loyalty of her splendid colonies and dependencies. One of the great blessings this savage war has produced has been the bringing together in closer and more intimate relations all parts of the Empire, as well as demonstrating the true friendship of America.

Everyone is of the opinion that up to the present time this sunny island is the safest and pleasantest residence in the world. Everything

appears to run smoothly and comfortably except the cold, which has been unusually severe and long this winter, and which has been felt a good deal owing to the dearness of coal and scarcity of paraffin. Of course many things formerly thought to be indispensable are lacking, but the untiring solicitude of His Excellency, Lord Methuen, and his Staff, and Lady Methuen's thoughtful care for distressed families, tend to make things work smoothly. Under the heavy pressure of this terrific war everyone is full of anxiety for the heroes fighting and many have the sorrow of recent partings. My pen refuses to dwell either on the no distant past or the present.

I am rejoiced to say that at times my sorrows are greatly lightened by the kindness and affection bestowed on me by many dear good friends, especially those in the Navy who from far and near do not forget me. I receive many delightful letters from some and enjoyable visits from others when they are in Malta.

I heartily wish every good luck and happiness to all my "extraordinary nephews" and others to whom I will not wish a final good-bye, as I have every hope, should I live a while longer, to see the harbour of Malta free from all signs of war and become again the peaceful resting-abode of our splendid ships.

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